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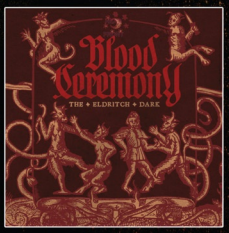

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LUCIFER RISING...

Growing up in an age when life was black and white (it wasn't really, but a laptop and the Internet were nothing but the unrealised dreams of nerdy young geeks), I remember the younger me gazing at the mysterious covers of albums such as Bathory's 'Under The Sign Of The Black Mark' with awe, wonderment and a sense of worry, too. While the music blasted out of the midi-system, my buddy Martin and I sat intrigued, wondering who and what was making this unholy racket that we'd just purchased at our local record store. Was Quorthon really the Devil incarnate? Would listening to Venom mean the Devil would land in the room and take us to Hell? And was King Diamond really a Satanist out to recruit us to the Dark Side? We were never too sure. Even listening to Maiden's 'Number Of The Beast' earned us a sure fire one-way ticket to Hell in my mother's eyes.

I could blame Rainbow Records and Durant Records of Shrewsbury (both now sadly deceased – R. I. P.) for providing me with the ammunition that helped my musical journey down the Left Hand Path, or maybe the Devil subconsciously enticed me to check out his tunes. Who knows? And while those youthful days didn't last forever, those bands, those tunes and many more like them, have had a profound effect on not just my life, but millions more around the globe – and continue to do so even today.

Compiled in conjunction with the Dark One himself, whatever your leanings and beliefs, I trust you'll enjoy this beast of magazine and let the Devil inside you come out and play!

Darren Sadler, Managing Editor

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BLOODY HELLFIRE! OUR FAVOURITE EVIL TUNES...

MIRANDA YARDLEY (PUBLISHER)
LED ZEPPELIN
'III' (ATLANTIC, 1970)
Contains some of the band's most passionate, moving and downright adventurous material

DARREN SADLER (MANAGING EDITOR)
SLAYER
'South Of Heaven' (DEF JAM, 1988)
If I'm going to burn in Hell, this is a pretty good soundtrack

JOHN CONSTERDINE (ONLINE EDITOR)
HELL
'Human Remains' (NUCLEAR BLAST, 2011)
Three decades in the making; a work of genius from the East Midlands' lords of hellfire!

STEVE NEWMAN (DESIGNER)
JESS & THE ANCIENT ONES
'ASTRAL SABBAT' (SVART, 2013)
Intensely hypnotic spectrum of '60s-flavoured psychedelia and brooding balladry

DARRELL MAYHEW (CRAYONS)
SLAYER
'Hell Awaits' (METAL BLADE, 1985)
A menacing and chilling thrash metal masterpiece. This album is pure evil. SLAYER!!!

HANNAH MAY KILROY (SUB EDITOR)
PENTAGRAM
'Pentagram' (PENTAGRAM RECORDS, 1985)
The ultimate in classic doom and one of my favourite albums ever!

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HELL Pic: Steve Gerrard

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GHOST Pic: ESTER SEGARRA

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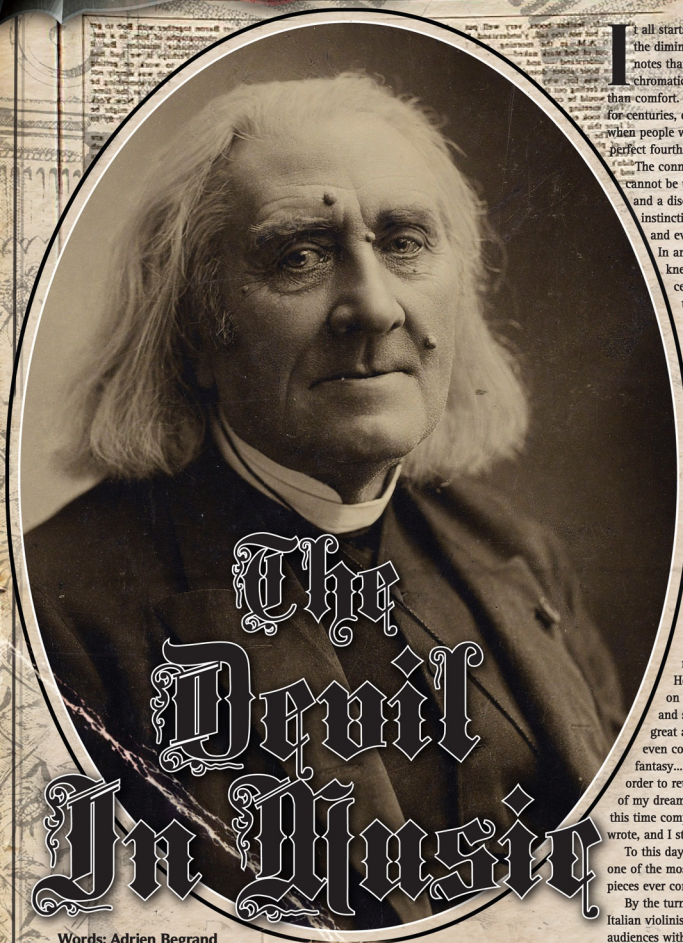


The Devil In Music

Words: Adrien Begrand

There's something to be said about the appeal of a good antagonist. If you're reading this magazine, chances are you prefer to take that so-called 'left hand path', to go against the mainstream, to delve into the darker, more blasphemous side of art. The allure of the wicked is innate in all of us – who *doesn't* think Hans Gruber is cooler than John McClane? – and from the very first mention of his name in the Old Testament, the Devil has always seemed a more attractive subject for outsiders to investigate, and nowhere has he been more effectively and provocatively explored than in popular music...

It all starts with the much-ballyhooed tritone, the diminished fifth and augmented fourth notes that sneak into the conventional chromatic scale and jar the listener rather than comfort. The device has been used in music for centuries, dating back to the Middle Ages, when people were only used to hearing in-tune perfect fourths and fifth notes in music.

The connection between music and the brain cannot be understated; it's a powerful thing, and a discordant note can immediately, instinctively come across unseemly, sour and even evil in the minds of listeners. In an early version of innumerable knee-jerk reactions to music over the centuries, Medieval clergies banned the use of the tritone in church music, branding it *Diabolus in Musica*, or 'The Devil's Interval'.

Needless to say, if you give it a name as cool as that, people will just plain gravitate to it, which they've been doing ever since.

The Devil has been used as a central theme in music as early as the liturgical drama 'Ordo Virtutum', composed by Hildegard of Bergen in 1151, but it wasn't until centuries later that the connection between Satan and music would be used provocatively. Italian Baroque composer and violinist Giuseppe Tartini claimed in 1713: "I dreamed I had made a pact with the Devil for my soul... Among other things, I gave him my violin to see if he could play. How great was my astonishment on hearing a sonata so wonderful and so beautiful, played with such great art and intelligence, as I had never even conceived in my boldest flights of fantasy... I immediately grasped my violin in order to retain, in part at least, the impression of my dream. In vain! The music which I at this time composed is indeed the best that I ever wrote, and I still call it the 'Devil's Trill'."

To this day Tartini's 'Devil's Trill Sonata' is one of the most technically challenging violin pieces ever composed.

By the turn of the 19th century, another Italian violinist, Niccolò Paganini, so enraptured audiences with his masterful performances that the spectacle, coupled with his gaunt features, led to widespread rumours that his mother made a pact with the Devil, trading her son's soul so he could become a musical virtuoso, or even more drastically, that he was the son of the Devil himself. There's something to be said about mystique, and there's no doubt those stories helped propel Paganini to the status as one of the greatest violinists in the world.

Stories of humankind being tempted by the dark side have always connected with people, and it was when French composer Charles Gounod

wrote an opera based on Part One of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragic play 'Faust' that the connection between the Devil and music truly started to take hold. With a plot that involves Mephistopheles betting God that he can steer God's favourite human, Faust, away from the righteous path, Gounod's opera was initially panned upon its premiere in March 1859, but became a hit after its revival in 1862. A rich, expressive piece in the French grand opera tradition, it enthralled audiences with its tug-of-war between good and evil, lyrically and musically.

Two years earlier, Hungarian composer Franz Liszt completed his 'Dante Symphony', inspired by Dante Alighieri's 'The Divine Comedy' and a fitting musical interpretation of Hell. Meanwhile, German composer Richard Wagner made brilliant use of the tritone in his work, the finest example being his 1876 opera 'Götterdämmerung'. As the 20th century loomed, classical composers continued to provoke audiences more and more. In 1906, after witnessing the premiere of the scandalous, sex, death, and religion-laden opera 'Salome' by Richard Strauss, Austrian critic Ernst Décsey famously wrote: "Nothing more satanic [sic] and artistic has been seen on the German opera stage."

> "I DREAMED I HAD MADE A PACT WITH THE DEVIL FOR MY SOUL"

Most of the credit for the increased connections between Satan and music in the 20th century goes to America. After all, when you view your country to be uniquely blessed by God, as America has done from the get-go, you always wind up demonising your enemies in the process, whether it's in religion, politics, or art. Consequently, upsetting the pious and paranoid in America has been half the fun for many musicians.

The Devil crept his way into American culture via European-derived traditionals and African American spirituals. Two of the most memorable songs from the early era of recorded music include 'Chased Old Satan Through The Door', recorded by the Woodie Brothers in 1931, and the hilarious 'Old Lady And The Devil' by Bill and Belle Reed. Recorded in 1928 the Reed's interpretation of the child ballad 'The Farmer's Curst Wife' wryly tells the tale of the Devil taking a farmer's wife away to Hell, only to find her so insufferable he gives her back.

By 1936 Satan had even infiltrated popular music, with Irving Berlin's 'Get Thee Behind Me Satan' sung by Harriet Hilliard in the film 'Follow The Fleet', then more famously by Ella Fitzgerald in 1958.

When jazz exploded in popularity in the 1920s, referencing Satan was never a priority among artists, but that didn't stop American authorities from decrying the new sound as "the Devil's music". Because the early black jazz innovators were prohibited from performing in conventional establishments in New Orleans, they were relegated to playing brothels and shadier locales in the city's red-light district. Consequently, to the puritanical white patriarchy, jazz seemed immoral, barbaric, and worst of all, threatening. In this instance, the association of jazz with the Devil was less about religion and more about thinly veiled racism.

It was the blues, however, that served as a perfect conduit for the mystique of the Devil, and no tale is more notorious than the story of Mississippi Delta blues musician Robert Johnson. Not much about Johnson's life and death at 27 has been documented, which has only made his legend grow. In a perfect, mythic retelling of 'Faust', a young Johnson, desirous of becoming a great blues musician, was told to take his guitar to a crossroad near Dockery Plantation at midnight, where he was met by a man calling himself the Devil – blues historian Adam Gussow notes how blues artists always referred to him as 'the Devil', not the 'Satan' of black spirituals – who tuned the guitar, played it, gave it back to Johnson, and giving him mastery of the form. Johnson's 'Hellhound On My Trail' helped fuel that legend. Sung with paranoia and dread, as if continually looking over his shoulder in the wake of that deal with the Devil, Johnson's performance on record is chilling as he sings the immortal first verse: *"I got to keep movin', I've got to keep movin' / Blues fallin' down like hail, blues fallin' down like hail / Blues fallin' down like hail, blues fallin' down like hail / And the day keeps on worrin' me, there's a hellhound on my trail."*

In August 1938, 14 months after recording the song, Johnson would be dead, the cause unknown.

With country music growing in popularity in the 1940s and 1950s, it's hardly a surprise that any references to the Devil from that era are minimal, never used for provocation but portrayed as an adversary in the Gospel tradition. The most audacious use of Satan, both lyrically and visually, came courtesy of Charlie and Ira Louvin, who not only created 'Satan Is Real' in 1960, a masterful album that unflinchingly dealt with sin and redemption, but featured one of the greatest album covers of all time, the brothers cheekily posed in a flaming gravel pit in front of a garish, 12-foot high plywood cutout of Beelzebub himself. As far as exploring the darker side of the Devil's appeal, though, it wouldn't be until the onset of 'outlaw country' in the 1960s and '70s that the genre would dive head-on in that direction, with great success.

Which leads us to rock 'n' roll, another of the Devil's true kindred spirits. The 'threat' of jazz was nothing compared to the immediate generational divide that ▸

happened when both white and black cultures came together in America to create the first true youth subculture. It very clearly alienated the baby boomers from their parents, which of course led to trouble. The classic 'Simpsons' line puts it best: "I used to be with it, but then they changed what it was. Now what I'm with isn't it, and what's it seems weird and scary to me."

And did rock 'n' roll ever have fun pissing parents off, which included invoking the Devil every once in a while, whether it was Chuck Berry's harrowing, fire-and-brimstone 1955 song 'Down Bound Train' or Gene Vincent's rollicking yet seductive 'Race With The Devil'.

The more rock 'n' roll grew in the 1960s and the more the youth culture expanded and came of age, the more artists tried to push musical boundaries. While The Beatles dabbled in darker interests – occultist Aleister Crowley was included in the gigantic collage of celebrity visages on 1967's 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' – their peers and rivals the Rolling Stones went a little further, first tritely on 'Their Satanic Majesties Request' that same year, and then in stunning, artful fashion on the first-person narration of 'Sympathy For The Devil' in 1968.

Other artists went for pure shock value, and no one was more effective at it that decade than Arthur Brown, who bellowed, "I am the god of hellfire!" on the worldwide hit 'Fire' by his band The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown.

As the hippie subculture was starting to peak, some people were seeking darker alternatives. Suddenly Satanism became cool when Anton LaVey established the Church Of Satan in 1966, a philosophy based on individualism and atheism, viewing Satan as a symbol rather than a deity. The Process Church Of The Final Judgment, which was notorious for worshipping both Christ and Satan, grew in popularity in the mid-'60s, attracting singer Marianne Faithfull for a brief period. Meanwhile, Crowley-obsessed filmmaker Kenneth Anger hired a former member of psychedelic band Love named Bobby Beausoleil to score what would be his highly influential short film 'Lucifer Rising'.

Beausoleil would wind up meeting another aspiring musician named Charles Manson, become one of the Manson Family's first members, and would murder Gary Hinman, apparently on Manson's order, in 1969.

For all the criminality that started to emerge as sociopaths infiltrated what was once an innocent subculture – the Tate and LaBianca murders and the murder of Meredith Hunter at Altamont are two other well-known examples – plenty of genuinely good, openly Satanic music emerged late in the decade. The primitive rhythms and tribal chants of 'Come To The Sabbat' by English band Black Widow remain enthralling and intoxicating to this day ("*Come, come, come to the Sabbat, come to the Sabbat, Satan's there*"). It was the great Coven, though, who made the most lasting Satanic impression at the end of the 1960s with their album 'Witchcraft Destroys Minds & Reaps Souls'. Depicting upside-down crosses and the two-fingered 'sign of the Devil' in its gatefold photo, and featuring a recording of a Satanic Mass, it was the most fully realised marriage of Satan and rock 'n' roll to date.

"Sung with paranoia and dread, as if continually looking over his shoulder in the wake of that deal, Johnson's performance on record is chilling"

Less than a year later, four scruffy young men from Birmingham would bring everything full circle, introducing themselves with that infamous tritone, and unknowingly spawning an entirely new musical genre, giving the Devil his most fitting bedfellow yet. ☠

MIXTAPE

FRANZ LISZT
'Dante Symphony – Inferno' (1857)
WHY? The opening movement of Liszt's symphony vividly depicts Dante and Virgil's passage through the Nine Circles of Hell.
FIND IT ON: 'Dante Symphony'

BILL AND BELLE REED
'Old Lady And The Devil' (1928)
WHY? This recording of the old traditional offers an incessantly catchy, slyly humourous take on the Devil.
FIND IT ON: 'Old Lady And The Devil'

HARRIET HILLIARD & MAX STEINER AND HIS ORCHESTRA
'Get Thee Behind Me Satan' (1936)
WHY? The future Harriet Nelson debuted the Irving Berlin song in the film 'Follow The Fleet'.
FIND IT ON: '1936 Hits'

ROBERT JOHNSON
'Hellhound On My Trail' (1937)
WHY? The blues master's performance is haunting, as if anticipating his early death.
FIND IT ON: 'The Essential Recordings Of Robert Johnson'

GENE VINCENT
'Race With The Devil' (1956)
WHY? Badass rockabilly, Vincent's seductive persona, hot rods, and getting into races with the Devil helped contribute to arguably the biggest generation gap of the 20th century.
FIND IT ON: 'Race With The Devil'

THE LOUVIN BROTHERS
'Satan Is Real' (1960)
WHY? A broken man's affecting tale of how Satan's deceitfulness and Hell's punishment are as real as God's love.
FIND IT ON: 'Satan Is Real'

THE ROLLING STONES
'Sympathy For The Devil' (1968)
WHY? The Stones' most lyrically smart song originally courted controversy and ultimately became an all-time classic. Ubiquitous today, but its power remains undeniable.
FIND IT ON: 'Beggars Banquet'

BLACK WIDOW
'Come To The Sabbat' (1970)
WHY? An intoxicating blend of folk and progressive rock that helped pave the way for deeper explorations into Satanism by rock and metal musicians in the decades that followed.
FIND IT ON: 'Sacrifice'

COVEN

"I regularly perform Magick ceremonies and have much ritual sex"

THEY'RE THE BAND WHO STARTED IT ALL; TERRORIZER DELVES INTO THE STORY BEHIND OCCULT LEGENDS COVEN... WORDS: KIM KELLY

We've all seen the photo by now, whether it was on a record sleeve, in a Google Image result, or plastered across a mate's living room in Finchley. A group of mustachioed henchmen flank a High Priest in red and white, clutching implements of dubious origin and throwing the Sign of the Horns. They're all clustered around the tanned, naked flesh of a breathtaking blonde bombshell who lies draped across the ceremonial altar like a length of red velvet. Fire burns brightly in the corners and in the legend, encircling the words 'Coven' and 'Witchcraft Destroys Minds & Reaps Souls'. This was the world's introduction to the first proudly, openly, and devilishly serious Satanic rock band: Coven. Formed amidst the grunts and grime of working class Chicago, IL in the mid-'60s, the band rose to prominence thanks in no small part to their endlessly charismatic and dangerously bewitching chanteuse, one Jinx Dawson. Her throaty vocals and witchy lyrics left crowds breathless, and the group's occult dabblings had record execs clutching their pearls. The Black Mass included at the tail end of their 1969 debut album (the insert of which we described so lovingly above) was a landmark example of just how deeply Satanism's infiltration of rock music had begun to burrow. Jinx's own magickal roots are buried even deeper.

"I was born into the Left Hand Path," Jinx begins, quoting the lengthy biography posted on her official Facebook page. "My ancestors were secretly against the church and had Magick ceremonies at the Dawson Mansion where I stayed much of the time as a child. I was brought into this world under the Sign of the Goat on a Friday the 13th by a Dr. Jinks. Many decades ago, I became the first rock musick performer to come forward openly as a Left Hand Path High Priestess and Ceremonial Mage. And I was the first to reveal secrets long concealed in esoteric circles (e.g. the horned hand gesture known as 'The Sign of the Horns'). I bear the Sign of the Left Hand Path, an inverted pentacle, in the natural folds of my left palm. I was born into a very long lineage of Occult Adepts and Practitioners of the Ancient Arts. Some of them were members of the U.A.O.D. (United Ancient Order of Druids). Others were members of the Rosicrucian group Ordo Aureæ et Rosæ Crucis (Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross). I am of the Mayflower Society, a direct descendant of John Howland, 13th signator to the Mayflower Compact. Members of my family were also active in Freemasonry. My father was a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason, and my grandfather, a former Lt. Governor of Indiana, was High Priest of the Royal Arch Masons. So I am steeped in American illuminati."

She goes on to speak of her initiation into 'the Fold' at the age of 13, and of her fascination with voodoo ("I also gained experience from the Obeahs that worked in the big house. They practiced Hoodoo, so the mix was quite fascinating to me") before launching into the story behind the seemingly innocuous hand sign that is perhaps Coven's most enduring legacy.

"I was first taught the Horned Hand by my great grandfather and my two great aunts at the Dawson Family Mansion. I was just a toddler. They were all practicing Left Hand Path Magi. The Sign was a very secret hand gesture of recognition, one member to another. Being that they were born in the late 1800s and they learned it from their ancestors, this passed down hand sign kept them safe from uninitiated perpetrators which often tried to infiltrate the LHP ranks and do harm to its members. When the Coven 'Witchcraft' album was released in 1969, the Horned Hand sign was the main bone of contention with my great aunts, thus banishing me from their coven and the family and the Dawson family fortune. I had broken my oath never to reveal the Sign of the Horns. My blood was spilled," she says, a bit mournfully. "It does bother me to see the Horned Hand sign used so ubiquitously. Not only in the music world, but everywhere one looks, films, sports, television advertisements. I did hope back in 1968 when I first revealed my message that many would become illuminated. But I feel now that message has become diluted and sensationalised. And with the thousands of bands that are spreading the message of the Occult and personal freedom, I do hope they are sincere."

> "To me, heavy occult music is thought provoking, chilling and disturbing"

Given that the entire focus of this issue is exploring that stated sincerity, we can only hope that Jinx finds a few kindred spirits as she pages through the final result. As it turns out, there are at least a handful of bands featured herein of which she may approve (even if one band of Brummies just might have taken a few liberties with her songtitles).

"I think Ghost is very similar to Coven music," she says, merrily turning my assumptions on end. "They get that eerie, otherworldly lush harmony sound that we conveyed, especially on our third album 'Blood On The Snow'. And I think their stage show and garb is the most similar to the feel we presented beginning back in 1968. And I do not mind being mentioned alongside King Diamond, as he admitted that he directly lifted several lyrics from our albums and used them in his works. Black Sabbath have gained much notoriety for all this and been promoted by their handlers to such a blind reputation for being 'of the fold', and of a practice that they do not even have knowledge of. In this case, imitation is not a form of flattery. It could be quite dangerous. There is a ambivalence in their handling of such content. On one hand they have taken great pains to distance themselves from promoting the 'Black Arts' but on the other hand, they are not above the playing with the imagery to suite their market-driven agenda."

She continues, "But as for many of the other bands that have used the Satanic imagery after ▸

"we were
a real
practicing
coven"

Coven, I think it becomes confusing. Some so-called Satanic bands wear Christian crosses, some use the Satanic image as a gimmick to sell product. Some have confused the real meaning of the Horned Hand, as they do not even know what it really means. Left Hand Path is a lifestyle and a Practice, not a religion and definitely not something to be taken so lightly and glib. Many people do not know that Coven presented these images first due to the fact we were constantly getting banned, tours getting cancelled and not much publicity backing because we were a real practicing coven. There was much backlash and fear from the churches and the government when we first came out in 1968 and continuing up through the 1980s. We had constant death threats, even from other secret covens that did not want this information released. The other bands that came up after us were for the most part just dabblers for riches and fame. I grew up in a wealthy family with LHP ancestors, so I actually preferred being underground, my music and message being only for the taste of a few. But when I saw so much misinformation in later years clouding the picture I did get angry. And to be lumped into that fray was never something I felt was illuminating. Unlike later imitations, our debut album 'Witchcraft' was not meant for sensationalism, but rather it was presented with scholarly intent, which is why we included the Satanic Mass. What can any of these music groups present that is any more Satanic than what we presented on our first album 'Witchcraft'? It has all become derivative. To me, heavy occult music is thought provoking, chilling and disturbing. I came from an opera background musically and an LHP background traditionally and intellectually, so I wanted to do an important work, something that had never been done before. 'Tis like comparing the current 'Twilight' movies to the old 'Twilight Zone' series. Both entertaining, but one much more thought provoking and serious...."

If the current crop of 'occult rock/doom/death' bands are the faded monsters lurking under your bed, Coven are the dark force controlling the pitiless thunderstorm wailing outside your window: elemental, merciless, and wild.

"The magick ambiance was always strong [with Coven]. Steve Ross, Oz Osborne, Rick Durrett and I always seemed to fuel an inferno when we were together. People were shocked and would whisper when we would walk into a room. When we toured, if we decided to stop into a roadside station or eatery, heads would turn around at the same time with fear on their faces. But we never got hassled or into a fistfight. The Outlaws Motorcycle Club would sometimes help roadie for us and they were very protective. Back in 1968, we must have seemed wraithlike. I was intrepid as were the other members. I was more fearful of my now passed ancestors than any supernatural entity. Some in my family did not approve of my being in a 'rock band', they likened it to being a court jester. And they did not like me revealing secrets they had passed on to me. I ended up losing my inheritance over the 'Witchcraft' album for breaking my oath. And the consequences of doing something first that was so controversial at the time made me worry that the project and the live stage opera would be banned and forgotten. I was nearly correct. As for rituals, there were a few times our ceremonies went awry. Likewise, Aleister Crowley did not complete the Abramelin rite, and he did not perform the requisite banishing. He did not close the ritual properly. We experienced a similar hostile response."

Despite their '60s pedigree and tour stories from pounding the pavement with The Yardbirds, Alice Cooper, and Vanilla Fudge, as far as Coven were concerned, 'it's only rock'n'roll' was far from the truth. From terrorizing their Mercy Records higher ups with Satanic masses and having their records pulled for 'obscene' content, the Midwestern menace were never far from a fight. The heavy, spacey, otherworldly music they created still stands up today, however, and Jinx's voice echoes soundly within the recordings of countless modern offerings. Their impact is undeniable, and the cult of personality surrounding Jinx herself seems to carry on growing even. Even a simple email exchange makes it very obvious that this is a powerful woman, and her magickal background only lends to her aura.

"Women ultimately make superior Magickians," Jinx opines. "They are natural Magickians, even the ones that do not practice witchcraft. The female monthly cycle directly corresponds to the moon. The fact that women serve as the vessel of creation makes them a microcosmic reflection of the universe. Regarding intuition, women certainly have it over the men. Occult music definitely lends itself to having a female singer. How can you have a witchcraft band without a witch? Hecate is a female archetype. I rest my case."

In 2008, Jinx Dawson suffered a heart attack and near-death experience, and now, five years down the line, she insists that she is "perfect".

"My tubes were cleaned of years of rock and roll and stress. I have another million miles. I was DOA, so this is all just extra Earth time for me. I saw the otherworld and I shall be most embracing when it finally cometh."

As much as she professes to welcome the end, Jinx is one of the few old school rockers who admit to harboring a few long-held regrets, and, in typical Jinx fashion, they center around love, sex, and magic.

"I would probably have stayed in contact longer with my old friend Roger Taylor of Queen. He was the love of my life if I ever was in love. But it was probably just extreme animal lust. As far as my career goes, I should have strangled a few of the people along the way that ripped me off for millions. But I always try to deal with those evils in a metaphysical way."

Though Coven has lain dormant for many years, Dawson is quick to assure me that the silence will soon be broken. She's stayed busy with small acting roles, curating an eBay store through which she sells Coven memorabilia and various occult ephemera, writing a forthcoming book, and corresponding with her many admirers. It's been a while since she's sprawled nude across an altar block, but the lady's definitely still got it.

"I am always writing music for a new album. I am in contact constantly with Rick Durrett and Steve Ross, keyboardist and drummer of the original Coven. We have had many conversations about a new release. Time will tell. I am also in the throes of finishing my book and am constantly manifesting Magick Sigils for commission to bands and private parties. There is a documentary in the works. I regularly perform Magick ceremonies and have much ritual sex. I have been auctioning part of my extensive inverted rosary and ceremonial tool collection at eBay. I really have no blood relatives left to leave them to so I thought passing them on to cherished friends was the best way to preserve them."

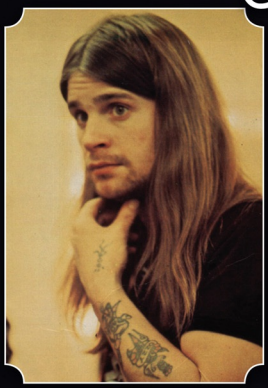
With a legacy like hers, it's a wonder Jinx worries about the preservation of a few trinkets, but who are we to question it? Without Jinx Dawson and Coven, none of us would be here right now. Bow the fuck down to the queen of it all. ☠

www.Facebook.com/Jinx.Dawson

In The Shadows

THE DARK, DRAGGED-OUT TONES OF DOOM ARE THE PERFECT CHANNEL FOR THEMES AND IDEAS RELATING TO THE OCCULT; TERRORIZER EXPLORES THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND DOOM...

WORDS: GUY STRACHAN



OZZY OSBORNE - BLACK SABBATH

As it goes through a renaissance and edges towards becoming a phenomenon, the recent rise of occult doom as a genre has been a rapid one; the attraction of darkness, the theory of the Devil having the best tunes, a by-product of the ever-growing interest in retro genres of all styles, a burgeoning interest in the large number of low-budget European horror films of the late '60s and early '70s, or a combination of those reasons and more having played a part. Whatever the underlying reason, the genre's ever-growing profile today mirrors its growth when it first saw the light of day over 40 years ago, albeit without the media hostility and air of panic that it generated four decades ago.

Black Sabbath are often on the receiving end of pointed fingers for introducing occult themes into rock, having invoked their name from a film and with their desire to create something darker and more sinister than the rock world was delivering in the late '70s. The original doom lords were driven by a combination of Dennis Wheatley novels and, moreover, by the soundtracks and imagery of contemporary horror films. Yet by the time the fruits of Osbourne and company's attempts to transpose the captivating eeriness and discomfort of a horror film soundtrack into their sound appeared in the shape of 'Black Sabbath' in 1970, other contemporary bands were arguably far more dedicated to a musical left hand path, looking not just to the occult-themed influences available to them at the time, but in several cases they had members that were, or they worked with, full-blown practitioners of the dark arts.

BLACK WIDOW

The year before, American outfit Coven released 'Witchcraft Destroys Minds And Reaps Souls', which marked the first visible incorporation of Satanic imagery in rock music. While a perfectly decent slab of contemporary rock, attention rapidly focused more on the 13 minutes of chants, demonic prayers and invocations that formed the closing track 'Satanic Mass'. The band's imagery and notoriety (in no small way down to their practice of signing contracts in blood) led to a sensationalist attack by the press, who were intent on linking the band to the Charles Manson murders (with similar difficulties also causing problems for Black Widow as well).

Often compared to their more famous contemporaries, Leicester's Black Widow released their 'Sacrifice' album the same year and quickly achieved infamy through not just the devilish references in their work but also for the mock sacrifice of a woman during their gigs and engaging the services of noted witchcraft practitioner Alex Sanders as a consultant. Changing direction in the wake of a spate of problems, the two self-titled follow-ups failed to match the sales of their debut and the band broke up shortly thereafter, but became to be seen as the godfathers of the genre in the years after their demise.

Although these three bands achieved mainstream attention, there were a number of ▸

"We've made people turn their heads"

THE DEVIL'S BLOOD Pic ESTER SEGARRA

ELECTRIC WIZARD

BLOOD CEREMONY

PAGAN ALTAR Pic ESTER SEGARRA

bands working in a similar vein who, despite their often short-lived careers, can always lay a claim to being early prime movers of the genre, such as Salem Mass with 'Witch Burning' (1971), the self-titled album from Zior (whose vocalist Keith Bonsor was rumoured to be a practicing occultist) and Bobby Liebling's Pentagram (who, like the genre they helped spawn, are undergoing a new-found rejuvenation) whose early '70's recordings were collected on 2001's 'First Daze Here'.

Unsurprisingly, given the country's output of uniquely over-the-top, twisted horror films from the minds of Dario Argento, Mario Bava and Lucio Fulci that toyed with such themes, alongside some of the most suitably spine-chillingly intense soundtracks from the likes of Goblin, Italy also made big inroads into the genre. Jacula instantly came to prominence in their home country thanks to their dark and mystical take on psychedelic rock; but after releasing two albums between 1968 and 1972 the band, led by philosopher-cum-musician Antonio Bartoccetti) disappeared until resurfacing in the early '00s. Led by Steve Sylvester (who was an initiate of the Ordo Templi Orientis, an occult organisation best known for having Aleister Crowley as a member), Death SS formed in 1977 and released a series of limited singles before splitting in 1984; but not before their make-up and horror-influenced metal had stirred others into action. Reforming in 1988 without guitarist Paul Chain (who himself went on to record a number of influential occult-tinged records over the years), the band swiftly issued their debut album and have continued the horror ever since.

Following on Death SS' heels were Black Hole, who formed in Verona in 1981 and released two albums and a smattering of demos during their nine-year tenure. Their debut album, 'Land Of Mystery', while slightly uneven, is easily one of the better examples of a metallised horror film soundtrack. Genoa's Zess formed during Death SS' hiatus, but took the influences of darkness to a harder, rawer level, as demonstrated by the 'Et In Arcadia Ego' that rounds up the recordings made during Zess' brief lifespan.

The occult flavours of metal were reignited in the twilight of the '70s and began to find a foothold in the burgeoning New Wave Of British Heavy Metal movement, with Pagan Altar leading the charge by invoking as dark an imagery as they could, notably through songwriting band members seeking inspiration by repairing a local cemetery in the small hours and utilising a prominently-featured coffin as a stage prop. Despite never releasing anything more than a demo or two during their original tenure, the band had an uncommonly large impact on the underground (including an offer of a support slot from the then fledging Metallica) and today are frequently credited with birthing the doom genre. Witchfynde and Hell were both noted for their debut album ('Give 'Em Hell') and EP ('Save Us From Those Who Would Save Us') respectively, yet were overshadowed by Witchfinder General, whose re-enacting of the torture of nubile alleged witches and blasphemers for their record sleeves ensured a torrent of publicity, even if the band were never able to truly capitalise on it.

Though black metal took the Satanic spotlight throughout much of the '80s, '90s and beyond, occult rock slowly seeped back into consciousness, thanks predominantly to Sweden's Ghost and The Devil's Blood from The Netherlands, who both rapidly came to prominence in much the same way as the forbearers of the genre had done 40-odd years prior. Ghost in particular, through a dual punch of eerie, mysterious imagery and a palette of melodic, almost classic rock-sounding riffage ("We incorporate melodies and structure and riffing to achieve a horrific sound. It's supposed to be frightening and seducing. If someone chooses to call it pop that's their loss. Everyone can't like the band. As long as they talk about the band, that's perfect. When people try to slag the band it's mission accomplished. We've made people turn their heads," says a Nameless Ghoul), have been the focal point of attention, yet alongside those outfits stand the likes of Blood Ceremony, Devil and Witchcraft, who have achieved an enviable reception in a relatively short space of time. Long-time purveyors of Sabbath-loving doom Electric Wizard began to wear their fascination with Devil-worshipping erotica on their (record) sleeves, culminating in the hauntingly epic dirges that formed their 'Black Masses' album, while the Italians continue to keep the flame alive through Abysmal Grief and Black Oath, to name but two. Alongside Alia O'Brien of Blood Ceremony and The Devil's Blood's, Farida, Jex Thoth is a similarly noted frontwoman feted as a prime mover in the current New Wave Of Occult Metal. Originally formed as Totem before invoking their singer's name for the band, Jex Thoth have been one of the heavier bands to surface of late, while the lady herself is also a member of Sabbath Assembly, who proffer an authentic take on the original, psychedelic and experimental realms of the occult doom genre.

With newcomers such as Uncle Acid And The Deadbeats being greeted with the sort of hype and reverence once reserved for NME-approved indie bands and Ghost being name-checked by everyone from Phil Anselmo to James Hetfield and beyond, it remains to be seen whether occult doom will continue to be as long-lasting as it is currently popular, or whether the run of allegedly devil-driven bad luck that affected the early progenitors will cause a multitude of lacklustre record-fuelled burn-outs. The sheer success of some of the bands indicates the former... ⊛

"Black Widow quickly achieved infamy for the mock sacrifice of a woman during their gigs"

MIXTAPE

COVEN
'Wicked Woman'
WHY? The place where the occult meets with rock music for the very first time.
FIND IT ON: 'Witchcraft Destroys Minds & Reaps Souls' (Mercury 1969)

BLACK WIDOW
'Come To The Sabbat'
WHY? Although compared to Black Sabbath, Black Widow were a more progressive outfit. Their debut contains this track, which is as close to an occult rock anthem as you'll get.
FIND IT ON: 'Sacrifice' (CBS 1970)

GHOST
'Elizabeth'
WHY? The modern-day flagship for occult rock, taking in classic metal riffs, swathes of melody and a hefty dollop of mystery.
FIND IT ON: 'Opus Eponymous' (Rise Above 2010)

PAGAN ALTAR
'The Black Mass'
WHY? One the most atmospherically intense bands of the NWOBHM, Pagan Altar never released anything during their original tenure, but their demo tapes ensured that their name would be spoken in reverential terms to this very day.
FIND IT ON: 'Volume One' (Oracle 1998)

ELECTRIC WIZARD
'Black Mass'
WHY? The band's sound might have become a touch cleaner, but this is a seriously hypnotic, volume-drenched paean to the dark one.
FIND IT ON: 'Black Masses' (Rise Above 2010)

DEATH SS
'Inquisitor'
WHY? Take-no-prisoners metal collides head on with outcasts from a mutant zombie film. Their influence on the second wave of black metal cannot be ignored.
FIND IT ON: 'The Story Of Death SS...' (Minotauro 1987)

BLACK HOLE
'Demoniac City'
WHY? It's where the cinematic influence of Goblin's soundtracking of low-budget Italian horror collides with underground metal in all of its fearful glory.
FIND IT ON: 'Land Of Mystery' (City 1985)

BLOOD CEREMONY
'Hymn To Pan'
WHY? A modern-day Sabbath replete with a sinister swagger.
FIND IT ON: 'Blood Ceremony' (Rise Above 2010)

"We had something else: we had Tony's 'fifth chord' - the spooky chord"

BLACK SABBATH

SATAN LAUGHING SPREADS HIS WINGS

BLACK SABBATH. NO OTHER BAND HAS HAD SUCH A DEFINING ROLE IN THE MUSIC SCENE. EVERY BAND THAT HAS EVER BEEN FEATURED IN TERRORIZER HAS SALUTED THESE BLACK COUNTRY BEHEMOTHS – AND IT'S NOT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY. PRIOR TO HIS SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL SPLIT WITH HIS BANDMATES, DRUMMER BILL WARD REFLECTED ON HIS CAREER AND THE DEVIL INSIDE THEM THAT MADE SABBATH SO GREAT...

WORDS: RONNIE KERSWELL-O'HARA

Springing up in Birmingham from early incarnations Mythology and Earth, Sabbath officially formed in '68, taking inspiration from the blues boom of the '60s and bands such as The Powerhouse Four, The Blues Syndicate, Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

Says original drummer Bill Ward: "I was brought up with jazz, Glenn Miller and American blues. Me and Tony (Iommi) loved John Mayall; the British guys were playing their own interpretation of the American blues and I loved that."

But it wasn't just their love of jazz and blues that got them attention. With a good old dose of crooked crosses and heavy handed riffery, Black Sabbath were pioneering amongst a wealth of revolutionary contemporaries including Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Blue Cheer, Steppenwolf, Grand Funk Railroad and Love Sculpture.

"There were bands like Led Zeppelin around but we had something else: we had Tony's 'fifth chord' – the spooky chord!" says Bill of the use of the 'devil's interval', (musos call it a tritone, we call it the ultimate doom chord!).

Their lyrics also painted dark and vivid imagery; while fellow bands sang of a whole lotta love, 'Sabbath sang of witches gathering at black masses...

"When Ozzy said, "*What is this that stands before me?"* [from the track 'Black Sabbath'] it was like nothing else," recalls the drummer. Add into the mix frontman Ozzy Osbourne's wild onstage antics and you have the recipe that made them legends in their own lifetime. The only downside? Enduring a barrage of claims from God-botherers that listening to them was tantamount to devil worship!

"There was always a lot of that," laughs Bill, who explains that their songs often received unexpected responses. "When we wrote 'War Pigs', America was just pulling ▸

GIRL OR
GORILLA
HEAD
SABBA

out of Vietnam and that song became an anthem for the US troops who had been there – they just went crazy singing along when we opened with it!"

While their 1970 self-titled debut release took the critics a while to get used to, 1970's 'Paranoid' (the multi-platinum-selling album which includes 'War Pigs'), is often hailed as the Black Country boys' career-defining effort, transforming their career and the face of music in general.

"On the first record we were just getting used to the sound. We felt more confident with what we were doing on the second album," nods Bill. "We'd grown together, there had been a lot of mileage on the road and 'Paranoid' was the sound of a band who'd come together. The first three albums were a great time for us," the drummer says of the band, whose classic line-up was completed by bassist Geezer Butler.

"I'm not going to say we partied harder than anyone, I don't think partying is a competition, there's only so high you can go; you can't do it harder than other bands."

And Bill should know – while 'Sabbath were fast-gaining a reputation as one of the heaviest around, their rock 'n' roll excess was not to be out-done either. Older, wiser, and now sober for over 30 years, he's reflecting on the time that led to a period of homelessness in America and almost cost him his life. "I had a few brushes with death via alcohol and substance abuse when I was living on the streets. I'd been sober for six months before that, while we were recording 'Heaven And Hell', and it was the first album I'd drummed on sober," confesses the drummer, who recalls that the prospect of touring the album and playing to sizable crowds sober for the first time was the catalyst for his self-destruction.

"I was terrified and didn't know how to handle it. My mistake was that I held all that in and didn't tell the rest of the band. To try and cope with it all I was having a drink in secret, which eventually led to me going back to America and ending up on the streets. At the time, I knew how to not have a drink; I just didn't know how to be sober. With hindsight, I was an alcoholic in the younger days with the amount I was drinking, I just didn't realise I had a problem – but you don't, do you? Now I know how to be sober and deal with it. People go on about numerous television sets they've thrown out the Riot House in LA, how many drugs they've taken, how much they've drunk... that's not important, it's the music that is the main thing."

Over the years, Black Sabbath have seen some metal luminaries in their line-up, including the late Ronnie James Dio, whose place at the mic stand in time for 1980-release 'Heaven And Hell' informed the 'Sabbath breakaway band Heaven & Hell, which featured Tony, Geezer, Dio and drummer Vinnie Appice, while Ozzy went on to release a number of solo albums, nosh a bat or two and become a media icon via TV fly-on-the-wall series 'The Osbournes'.

The original line-up have since re-grouped minus, controversially some may argue, Bill, and '13' (with Rage Against The Machine's Brad Wilk supplying drums) is expected in June. Now with more than four decades under their belts, bands still cropping up in homage and an ever-swelling legion of fans, there's no sign of the Sabbath-effect slowing any time soon. ⊛

www.BlackSabbath.com

"When Ozzy said, "*what is this that stands before me?*" it was like nothing else"

Mercyful Fate

Pic: Alex Solca

WITH ONE ALBUM ABOUT TO CELEBRATE ITS 30TH BIRTHDAY AND THE OTHER NOT FAR BEHIND, KING DIAMOND TALKS ABOUT TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVY METAL ALBUMS OF MODERN TIMES...

WORDS: KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

Three decades on and it still happens. When the opening notes of 'Evil', the first track from Mercyful Fate's debut album 'Melissa', emerge from the speakers and the lyric *"I was born on the cemetery"* ghoulishly slides from the voicebox of King Diamond, the world's friendliest and most endearing Satanist, skin turns pimply, stomachs get butterfly-like, fists clench and are raised aloft as heads bang and everyone within earshot is transported to an alternate universe where white crosses are taken to the middle of the ring, where mummified pharaohs pretend to be dead in their sleep, where long black coats are shelter from the rain and run-on sentences are acceptable currency in tribute. That's because we're talking about one of heavy metal's finest moments; an album that possesses the same power and impact now as when it first hit turntables and cassette decks when it was released the day before Halloween in 1983. And if the Danes hadn't already cemented their place in the annals of metal's various Halls Of Fame with the 'Nuns Have No Fun' (or whatever you want to call it) mini-album of 1982, less than a year after 'Melissa' they followed up with 'Don't Break The Oath', another masterpiece of slithery prog metal informed by European classic rock and the inhuman range of one Mr. Kim Bendix Petersen.

"Some of those songs were recorded at a BBC radio session we did, even before we did the actual 'Melissa' album, around the same time as the mini-LP," says King Diamond about the band's salad days. "Our deal with Roadrunner had actually been signed backstage at one of the first Aardshok festivals. The day before we had been in Amsterdam at the Roadrunner office and talking to Cees Wessels; we went through everything and he explained everything. I wanted to know what we were getting into and what the whole contract meant. At that time, on the spot, he practically gave me a quick education about the music industry for which I'm eternally grateful."

As it stands, we're not just celebrating the round-number release of 'Melissa', but the beginning of that brief window of time where metal's brightest sounding black cloud draped the underground and the beginnings of serious post-Venom, pre-Norwegian murder metal Satanic philosophy started to gain a foothold in metal. As well, ask any gathering of patched-up denim dudes whether they prefer 'Melissa' or 'Don't Break The Oath' and you'll have a Mexican stand-off on your hands on par to the 2001 American election – though this is something of actual importance – where 33.3 per-cent of respondents will claim the debut, 33.3 per-cent will side with the follow-up and the remaining 33.3 per-cent will bray about it being too difficult a decision to make.

"After the 'Melissa' album came out, publishing money suddenly started appearing and it was like, 'Whoa! What's this?' I could actually go to the government and tell them that I didn't want to be on social security anymore because a lot of the time before that we were broke. I had made the decision to quit my job as a lab technician to play music. We were rehearsing at least four times a week, forging bus tickets to get to rehearsal and having to decide ▶

Fact File:
ALBUM
'Melissa'
RELEASE DATE
October 30th 1983
LABEL
Roadrunner
PRODUCER
Henrik Lund
"If there was no evil in our lives, human beings would never be able to express our feelings"

"You need extremities to be alive and be able to compare anything to anything else"

whether to spend money on food or cigarettes. But it became a job after the 'Melissa' album and has been ever since."

But before it became a job – one he obviously wouldn't trade for anything – Mercyful Fate existed just like any other band: getting together to jam, having fun in the process with the resonant clink of beer bottles acting as background accompaniment to overdriven guitars, pounding drums and a shoddy rehearsal room PA. Then, there was the Keystone Kops routine that followed many bands of the day trying to best capture the power and heaviness of heavy metal's progression as it was still continuing towards unknown territories, as they employed producers and engineers with little knowledge, experience or love of the sound.

"Actually, ['Don't Break The Oath's] 'The Oath' and 'Come To The Sabbath' were written before 'Melissa' was recorded. They just didn't make it on because [guitarist] Hank [Shermann] had written a whole bunch of stuff, but it hadn't been arranged yet and once [guitarist] Michael Denner started writing, we just had too much for the first album so we had to decide what we felt was ready at that time. So many of those songs had so many different versions back then that people will never hear and they kept developing. One song could have been split up into several songs. At one point we had so many different half songs, they were eventually put together to make 'Satan's Fall'.

"We did both albums in the same studio [Easy Sound Recording] but it was quite different," he continues.

"It was a big step up from the mini-LP to 'Melissa'. We had seven to 10 days to do the whole thing, but it was still better than two-and-a-half days for the mini-LP. And unlike the mini-LP, we had time for backing vocals and guitar harmonies. The one thing that irritated me was that we were not allowed in the control room during the mixing of 'Melissa'. It's not like we knew anything, but we still wanted to be there to listen. It felt like being at the dentist's office because we had to sit out in the lounge and the guy would come out and let us come in and listen. We'd ask where the guitars and backing vocals were and tell him, 'This isn't Danish pop music, man. This is metal'. So, he'd kick us out, we'd sit there and watch TV and twiddle our thumbs and go over the whole album again and again and again until we finally agreed. That same thing started when we did 'Don't Break The Oath' and I told him, 'I'm staying right fucking here, I don't care what you say. I'm tired of this time wasting bullshit.

We tell you about all these changes and I hear no fucking difference. When I say I want to hear that church organ in the intro or all parts of the vocal harmonies, I want to see your fingers doing something. I'm tired of this guessing game!' That's the way it was back then; we didn't know much, but the best way to learn was to actually be there. Eventually, everything ended up moving way faster and we got much more onto that second album. It was like an actual development."

Given that 'Melissa' is celebrating its – ironically enough – diamond anniversary this year, this definitely won't be the last word of salutation the metal press and cognoscenti utters in praise. Hell, it's not like the passage of 30 years was needed to push along our community's recognition of the band's masterworks. And given King Diamond's predilection for giving lengthy interviews wherein us hacks basically introduce ourselves and give him the verbal ball to sprint with to a distant finish line, expect much more official salutation, especially as we get closer to Halloween. However, we wondered if the band's home nation had expressed a modicum of recognition of their most evil sons. For better or for worse, depending on who you're talking to and where their musical tastes and religious beliefs lie, Mercyful Fate undoubtedly brought Danish art to the international stage long before communication was instant, easy and at the touch of one's thumb.

"Actually, one of the biggest reasons anyone in Denmark paid attention to us was because at the time, there wasn't a lot of international potential for Danish bands in the heavy genre and national radio heard about us and became very interested in trying to help. So, we often had our music played on national radio and were often invited to be interviewed on air. Funnily enough, we had already become pretty notorious even before the first EP because there was this priest who wanted us banned from the radio. That led to some pretty interesting on-air debates that got a lot of coverage in national newspapers. I remember this one time a priest arguing with us about how 'A Dangerous Meeting' was bad for the youth because the song was about evil and people killing each other. It was like, 'Hey man, take an English course or something. This song is actually a warning about not fooling around with Ouija boards'. Eventually, I had to just get up and leave. There are some of the TV debates on YouTube; some of these people are so brainwashed and you just couldn't talk to them.

"But yeah, those records have been recognised in Denmark," he explains. "I wasn't there, the other guys were, but they gave Mercyful some sort of lifetime achievement award and some sort of trophy that I've never even seen. I think it's in Michael Denner's shop or something [laughs]. I'm different than them, or maybe most people, because I honestly don't care. Those sorts of things really don't mean anything to me; they don't make me better or worse and it's not why I'm doing this. When they gave King Diamond a Grammy nomination [in 2008 for 'Never Ending Hill' off of 'Give Me Your Soul... Please'], I was happy to see that the fans were happy about that, but it doesn't change anything for me.

"It was also a challenge touring the US in the early days on those albums. I still wasn't that proficient and confident in English and whenever someone wanted to do an interview or ask me a question, I had to quickly do an internal translation to Danish and then try come up with an answer in Danish that I would try and verbally express in English. It was difficult, but people would always ask about 'Evil' and in the process it gave me the opportunity to explain myself and talk about other things related to it in some way. There's a reason we have the saying 'necessary evil'; If there was no evil in our lives, human beings would never be able to express our feelings. If you've never had a bad day, how can you say you've had a good day? You have to have something to measure it up against – sweet and sour, light and dark, you need extremities to be alive and be able to compare anything to anything else. If everything was good all the time, you'd be in a coma."

And while Mercyful Fate itself may be in a are-they-a-band-or-aren't-they-a-band limbo, their impact is undeniable and not even a near-death experience can seemingly stop The King from doing what he loves, hands-on keeping the machine running, but still remaining humble about his body of work.

"Someone asked me recently in an interview about what it feels like to have inspired and influenced a couple of bands and I didn't know the names at all. Honestly, I'm too busy. We do our own management – me, [guitarist] Andy [LaRocque], Hank and [manager] Ole Bang – we set up the tours, we're involved in selecting venues with our booking agents... just the other day we were booking flight tickets and trying to figure out where we were going to rehearse in Germany for the upcoming European tour. Unfortunately, I just don't have time to keep up with all the new bands. In the old days it was different when I was spending all my money on music. Anyway, I was asked about being worried about falling behind these other bands in terms of the shock effect, but I've never been one to go out and shock deliberately. It's always been about us and being straight from the heart and that's what you hear in 'Melissa' and 'Don't Break The Oath' and every other record I've ever done, for that matter. I know that when you hear those albums, there's no doubt you know it's us." ☠

www.KingDiamondCoven.com

Fact File:

ALBUM
'Don't Break The Oath'

RELEASE DATE
September 7th 1984

LABEL
Roadrunner

PRODUCER
Henrik Lund

Darkness Ascends:

The Culture Of Dark, Satanic And Ritualistic Music

ELECTRIC WIZARD

Historically, the connection between dark forces and music has been around ever since we humans discovered we could bash skins and vocalise. Whether to invoke or inspire, the occult has always produced a rich seam to mine, setting the right atmosphere and tone. From inverted crosses, horned deities and black masses to secret knowledge and societies or the more esoteric side, cabalistic concerns have found their way to the heavier side of the spectrum way before Ozzy Osbourne questioned, "What is that that stands before me?" opening Black Sabbath's 1970 debut. But this self-titled opus was one of the landmarks for metal's associations with the occult; whether taken as tongue-in-cheek as in the case of bands like Venom and Satan's Wrath, deadly serious like the Norwegian scene of the early '90s or for trance-inducing positive vibes as demonstrated by Om, evil riffery and forbidden lyrics go hand in hand, right? We take a look at the culture that surrounds the music to find out why it's just so damned interesting....

SATANISM

Let's start with the big one. Satanism is many things to many people: the 'anti-religion' for those who have turned to darkness, the cult of the rebel, or simply a set of diverse moral codes and values that are different from those accepted or followed by the mainstream. Satanism can be used for shock value; there's no better way to scare the living crap out of door-knocking evangelists than saying, "Not now, I'm a Satanist", and fantasy imagery of horned beasts and angels with scabbed wings has been used to great theatrical effect by metal bands over the years. But in real terms, most Satanists don't surround themselves with effigies of demons and understanding the word of the Opposer is a lot more to do with the self. "It's a very much self-centred set of beliefs," explains Jason Mendonça, former frontman of Akercocke. "Choosing not to turn the other cheek is certainly one of the Satanic statements, I don't think it's necessarily a selfish thing. Satanism is about enjoying life, living life to the full. I've encountered many people over the course of my life who have described themselves as Satanists. Some of those people have been completely, bewilderingly mad. They are not Satanists in the sense that I understand the word. Sadly, Satanism has often been associated with great atrocities; groups through history have chosen to hurt or slaughter animals in the name of Satan. Again, I view these people as completely stupid and detestable and I don't consider myself one of them. I don't think you need to have an arcane knowledge or even great knowledge of the occult, you have to look inside yourself. We don't believe that Satanists are made, we believe they are born with a Satanic mindset. If you have to ask how to be a Satanist, you are not one."

Of course some people's interpretation of lyrics or a band's connection to the occult can be a bit distorted, as Cathedral's Lee Dorrian once found out. "I've been a vegetarian for over 30 years and an animal rights activist," he maintains. "This guy once came up to me, gave me a box and was like, 'Don't open this now, open it later'. I thought nothing of it and put it on the bus. When I opened it up the next day it was a fucking dead cat – like cat bones and fur with loads of Satanic graffiti on bits of paper and stuff. The guy seemed really pleasant; I opened it up and that was what he'd given me."

BOSCASTLE'S MUSEUM OF WITCHCRAFT

Witchfinder General, Witchcraft, Angel Witch, Witch... You get the picture. Witchcraft has inspired the monikers and lyrics of a horde of unholy rollers and if you want to know more, the best place to head for is the Museum of Witchcraft in Cornwall, which holds the world's largest collection of witchcraft memorabilia. Housed in the deceivingly small museum are artefacts including effigies, ritualistic tools, herbs, charms, recordings of Aleister Crowley, and there's even a whole room dedicated to the darker side containing a massive library of writings on the subject. Satan's Wrath's multi-instrumentalist mainman Tas Danazoglou has been there. "The area around there is incredible but I probably have more artefacts in my house than the Witch Museum!" admits the collector. "We have a statue probably from the late 18th century and they have exactly the same thing in the Witchcraft Museum. I've been interested in it since I was a kid, I think I got into it because I was into heavy metal; it's a natural progression."

"I probably have more artefacts in my house than the witch museum"

AKERCOCKE

OUIJA

There aren't that many people who haven't had a go on a Ouija board, and Yvette Fielding and co. certainly make it look like a non-threatening way of contacting the dead. We don't know about you, but whether using for thrills or something more serious, most people have had some chilling encounters. Just ask Cedric Bixler-Zavala; if you were wondering why The Mars Volta's 'The Bedlam In Goliath' sounds so damned terrifying in parts, that's because it was born from some ominous late night sessions with an antique board, gifted to him by fellow bandmate Omar Rodríguez-López. "It was the best thing to do that wasn't cocaine, it was not something bad for you – or so I thought," recalls the singer. "The people we contacted were a combination of a dominating male voice and two dominating females. The way I read it was this betrayal and infidelity, like a love triangle between the mother, this man and the daughter. What I think happened was along the line of honour killings; the female voices were trying to tell us the story and the male voice was trying to suppress it." If you are wondering whether they checked out the story of the spirit they called The Soothsayer, read on... "We didn't want to – it was too close to home. There were moments where [The Soothsayer] described the outfit my girlfriend was wearing, and the strongest thing that happened was the nervous breakdown of our sound engineer. It takes a lot to deal with the music we make in general, but he was sound of mind. He never knew about the board and accused us of making evil music with evil intentions and creating an infernal machine. He didn't even know the subject matter and I didn't understand how he knew about it without us telling him. Superstition got the better of us as it seemed like a good thing to not say the songtitles out loud or the album title out loud."

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND THE FREEMASONS

The mystery and history surrounding the ancient order of The Knights Templar has influenced the likes of Electric Wizard and Cathedral. A society of warrior monks formed after the first Crusade, The Templars became one of the most powerful military organisations in the world; their reputation however provoked their destruction. Fearing the increasing power of the Templars, Pope Clement V issued an edict for the arrest of Templar Knights on grounds of blasphemy, accusing them of sacrilegious acts such as spitting on the crucifix and worshipping the severed head of John the Baptist. The nature of the allegations and treatment suffered by the Templars, combined with the attention given to them in popular culture, has led the Knights Templar to become enshrouded in mystery and an atmosphere of the occult, including the belief that they possessed knowledge of a profound secret. This legacy has only been further mystified by splinter organisations such as The Priory of Sion and the Freemasons. Gary Ash from goth/new wave merchants The Hiram Key is a mason, and explains the link between his Templar-influenced band name and the enigma: "The Hiram Key is to do with Freemasonry. Hiram Abiff was the chief architect of King Solomon's Temple who died protecting a secret. The Hiram Key is the truth behind religion and the fact that Jesus never said he was the son of God. The Romans came along and edited it to say we need the church so they could make a living out of the Catholic faith." Legend goes that should this secret be exposed, Western civilization and belief will inevitably collapse.

MYSTIC SYMBOLISM AND RITUAL

For some outfits, the use of anti-religious symbolism and onstage ritual is for theatrical purposes only. But for others, the history and power behind the rite has been well-researched. Not only is it a way of life, what they do on stage is very real, as Watain's blood-soaked frontman Erik Danielsson will maintain. "The inner-ritual workings of the concert is something that we keep within the band. I understand that people ask but there are many things within Watain that, for everyone's sake, we keep to ourselves. People in the modern age spend far too little time contemplating the symbols and all these old, ancient things that still surround us without

SATAN'S WRATH Pic: ESTER SEGARRA

anyone taking in the essence of them. With Watain, we have gained so much in giving these [symbols] the attention they deserve. There are centuries of wisdom and power contained within these symbols, if you have the ability and patience to unlock them. Every piece of art, be it music or anything else, that I appreciate has dealt with powerful things and spiritual or emotional extremes. Whether people see those concepts as light or dark, good or evil is subject to their own values in life."

ALEISTER CROWLEY

Also known as The Great Beast 666 and Frater Perdurabo, Crowley, born in 1875, was a powerful mystic, ceremonial magician and the channel for divine knowledge via entities he contacted during magical rites. One of the most influential occultists of all time, he was a member of the Hermetic Order Of The Golden Dawn, leader of Ordo Templi Orientis and founder of the Thelema philosophy, which he developed after 'receiving' an ancient text known as 'The Book Of The Law' from a divine source whilst living in Egypt. Ozzy, King Crimson, Coil, Tool, Current 93, Led Zeppelin, Carcass, Marilyn Manson and Behemoth are a handful of acts to have quoted Crowley, but going one stage further, Paradise Lost, Babylon Whores and Rob Zombie have all used Crowley's scratchy recordings on their works. Fields Of The Nephilim, whose track 'Moonchild' is the title of a Crowley novel, have also used his voice. "I just happened to acquire some old recording; some of it was quite fitting and went hand in hand with what we were trying to achieve so we went into the studio and threw a lot of that into the 'Elysium' album," reveals the 'Neph's floured-up frontman Carl McCoy. "He's cropped up on other tracks since then. I've read a lot about him – especially when I was a youngster, and I admire what he was about – he's an interesting character who made some big achievements but a lot of people don't understand him and he didn't take himself as seriously as people may think."

ALTERNATIVE PLANES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

While some like to err on the darker side, the arcane arts of the Sufi tradition, where meditation is an assimilation of death, and death leads to spiritual joy and peace, have informed the works of mystical merchants Om. "In the Sufi tradition, one of the higher grades of concentration is where the worshipper and the worshiped dissolve and there is only one. It's complete annihilation of the shell, ego and personality, the heart merges back into an ocean that is total indescribable joy and peace," believes Al Cisneros. "I'm definitely inspired by the writings of the saints and those of the different systems but in no way their organised forms. I'm interested in the philosophical core that goes past the meditative into philosophy. We all have to die, it's just, where is it going? It's not a fear of death, just an acceptance of it in the temporary lifespan that one has and to make it the best as possible." ⊛

"Superstition got the better of us"

COME TO THE SABBATH

ENTWINED WITH METAL COMES THE DEVIL'S LOVE OF ALL THINGS VISUAL, AND HORROR MOVIES ARE THE ESSENCE OF BOTH. WINTERFYLLETH DRUMMER, CAMERAMAN AND ALL-ROUND MOVIE FANATIC SIMON LUCAS DISCUSSES THE KEY ASPECTS OF THIS IMPORTANT GENRE

PORTRAIT PIC: ZEN INOYA

Horror is a genre that will be all too familiar to most fans of heavy metal music. The urge to terrify ourselves has been at the heart of heavy metal from its early inception into the world, with pioneers of the genre Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin both dabbling in the occult: Black Sabbath reporting strange supernatural experiences after reading esoteric books, and certain Led Zeppelin members purchasing properties such as the infamous Boleskine House in Scotland, a house in which Aleister Crowley practiced dangerous black rites.

Was this all just theatre? Or was there always a genuine deep-seated interest in the magickal side of existence? Certainly many contemporary musicians involved with heavy metal claim to genuinely practice occult rites such as the use of sigil rituals, an ancient alchemical idea that involves the practitioner creating an image that represents something that they want to achieve, pouring energy into it (by whatever the chosen means), and then destroying or forgetting about the sigil, quite often achieving surprising results.

The influence on heavy metal music from occult cinema is undeniable.

In the beginning there was Black Sabbath, who took their name from an absolutely amazing Italian horror film released in 1963 called 'I Tre Volti Della Paura' (The Three Faces of Fear). The film was released in Britain under the title 'Black Sabbath'. It is a style of film called a 'horror anthology' or a 'portmanteau' feature. Usually running at no more than 90 minutes, horror anthologies feature three or more separate (but sometimes intertwined) stories. 'Black Sabbath' starred horror icon Boris Karloff in a genuinely terrifying role. The film was made by legendary Italian horror director Mario Bava, who was also responsible for the film 'Black Sunday', a film about witchcraft in Medieval Europe. The British company Amicus became famous for making horror anthology style films. They are often spoken of as being the little brother of British horror titans Hammer, and their films are absolutely fantastic and very valid contributions to the genre. Amicus were responsible for such films as, 'The House That Dripped Blood' starring Ingrid Pitt, 'Dr. Terror's House Of Horrors' starring horror veterans Peter Cushing and Sir Christopher Lee, 'From Beyond The Grave' and 'The Beast Must Die'.

Hammer films from Britain are one of the world's most beloved creators of the occult horror film, and rightly so. Hammer were the undisputed kings of gothic horror, from Christopher Lee's dramatic performances as the enigmatic, aristocratic Count Dracula, to Peter Cushing's wonderful portrayal of the puritanical witch finder Gustav Weil in the excellent 'Twins Of Evil' (based on Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' novel), to Victorian Cornish villages beset by hordes of undead zombies under a voodoo spell in 'The Plague Of The Zombies'. Hammer was also responsible for one of the best occult horror films ever made, 'The Devil Rides Out'. Based on Dennis Wheatley's classic novel of the same name, it features Christopher Lee in a rare role as the 'hero', trying to save his friends from a Satanic cult led by the Crowley-esque character 'Mocata', played by Charles Grey. There are frenzied scenes of a black mass being practiced in a forest clearing on Salisbury Plain, culminating in an appearance by the "Goat of Mendes, THE DEVIL HIMSELF" as Lee's line goes. The film was directed by Hammer regular Terence Fisher, who was also responsible for all of the Hammer Dracula films, all of the Hammer Frankenstein films, the Hammer adaptation of 'The Hound Of The Baskervilles', and pretty much most of Hammer's classic era output. Iron Maiden's video for 'The Number Of The Beast' features footage from various classic films including 'The Devil Rides Out'. Hammer films have undoubtedly inspired countless metal bands over the decades. ►

"IT IS A BEAUTIFULLY ENCHANTING FILM ABOUT THE REJECTION OF CHRISTIANITY"

The short-lived but phenomenal 'folk-horror' subgenre of occult horror is quite possibly one of the most-loved aspects of the genre and has enchanted the minds of metal fans and musicians the world over. The first film in the genre came in 1968 with Michael Reeves: 'Witchfinder General'. An absolutely undisputed classic film and landmark of the genre, 'Witchfinder General' is quite simply a must for any British horror collection. It was released in 1968, stars classic horror icon Vincent Price and was directed by Michael Reeves, who actually died of an overdose only nine months after the release of the film aged 25. There has always been deep-seated superstition and belief in magical forces and witchcraft across England throughout history, particularly in the most rural areas. One thing is for sure, during the 17th century the English countryside was rife with accusations of witchcraft, from the Pendle Witch trials in Lancashire down to Suffolk and Essex. Current Liverpudlian psych doomsters Black Magician draw heavily from the history of the Pendle Witch trials.

However the film 'Witchfinder General' is set during the events of the English Civil War in 17th Century East Anglia, and is based on the real historical character of the Lawyer Matthew Hopkins who took it upon himself to purge the region of evil in his self-proclaimed role as Witchfinder General. In the film, a handful of sadistic executions are portrayed, as well as Hopkins' notorious torture methods to extract confessions from accused witches, all in the name of God. Reeves included many scenes of intense torture that were seen as very sadistic at the time and resulted in the film being heavily censored for its UK release. Luckily, this has since been rectified with the uncut DVD release. Vincent Price was well known for his often camp but endearing performances in previous horror films, a fact that Reeves was dubious of in his casting of Price as Matthew Hopkins in 'Witchfinder General'. However, Price gave what he has claimed personally as being one of his favourite performances ever; he plays the role very straight and seriously, and is a fantastic portrayal of the character. Incidentally, the film portrays Hopkins being vengefully murdered at the climax of the film's events in a torture chamber, however, in reality, the infamous Witchfinder died of an illness at his home in the village of Manningtree.

You don't have to look too far to see the film's direct influence on heavy metal, most notably with classic doom-laden NWOBHM band Witchfinder General and, of course, Cathedral's classic track 'Hopkins (The Witchfinder General)', is peppered with samples from the film, and the video for the track even features as a DVD extra on the director's cut of the film.

Cathedral are a band that have been influenced by occult horror films throughout their career, having also paid direct homage to films such as Hammer's 'Captain Clegg' ('Night Creatures'), and famously the cult 'Blind Dead' zombie film series by Spanish director Amando de Ossorio. These include films such as 'Tombs Of The Blind Dead' and 'Night Of The Seagulls'.

The series is about a sect of Templar Knights that in life worshipped Satanic forces, sacrificing local virgins in graphic execution rituals inside their monastery. Having made these sacrifices, they achieve eternal life and return every year on a specific date to terrorise the local villagers as undead zombified Knights Templar! ARISE!

"AN ABSOLUTELY UNDISPUTED CLASSIC FILM AND LANDMARK OF THE GENRE"

No article about the influence that occult horror films have had on heavy metal would be complete without mentioning Electric Wizard. The band have made a career writing about not only occult horror films and B-movies, but also the esoteric side of life in general.

To list all of the horror films that the Wizard collective have been influenced by would require an article in itself. Briefly, there is 'The Living Dead At Manchester Morgue' ('Let Sleeping Corpses Lie'), 'Psychomania', 'Blood On Satan's Claw' and 'The Satanic Rites Of Dracula', plus many, many more.

One of the most (until recently) rare classic occult films to get hold of is Ken Russell's notorious 'The Devils', which has only recently received the uncut DVD release that it deserves. Based on the book 'The Devils Of Loudun' by Aldous Huxley, it is the supposedly true account of the 17th century priest Urbain Grandier (played by Oliver Reed), and a sect of nuns (lead by Vanessa Redgrave), who become so obsessive with the enigmatic Grendier that they turn to near Satanic worship of him and become possessed, resulting in Grendier being tried for witchcraft. It is a stunning film, beautifully shot by Ken Russell and features some shocking scenes that have only recently seen the light of day such as the infamous 'rape of Christ' orgy scene. If you like the idea of nuns fornicating with each other, this is the film for you.

Hailed as the best horror film ever made, 'The Wicker Man', directed by Robin Hardy for British Lion films in 1973, made a late charge for glory in a British film industry that was at the time seeing the unfortunate decline of studios such as Hammer and Amicus in the mid-'70s. The film has without doubt inspired metal bands and film fans across the world. Starring Christopher Lee, Edward Woodward, Britt Ekland and Ingrid Pitt, it was made on a very low budget. However, Sir Christopher Lee loved the script and the idea so much, that he made the film for no fee whatsoever and just wanted to be involved: a true testament to his character and passion for the esoteric side of art. He has often stated that it is one of his favourite films that he has ever been involved with.

It was shot around various locations on the west coast and islands of Western Scotland, and is set on the fictional island of Summerisle (incidentally there are a group of islands that exist on the west coast of Scotland called the 'Summer Isles'). It is a beautifully enchanting film about the rejection of Christianity by an insular island community in favour of their pagan ancestral roots. The film conveys a touching affection for rural traditional British customs, such as the Maypole, Morris dancing, Elder trees planted on graves, May Day celebrations, stone circles, pagan ritual, and of course, folk music. The soundtrack was written and performed by the artist Paul Giovanni and is made up mainly of contemporary versions of traditional British folk songs. This really adds to the overall beautiful atmosphere of rural tradition that is present in the film. It is a bright and beautiful film throughout which serves to accentuate its true horror, that is only fully revealed in a terrifying climax in the closing moments. It is a beautiful commentary on organised religion in society and a wonderful homage to traditional rural customs in the British isles and aspects of British culture that are increasingly being lost, that should be cherished. This spring, dress your local natural spring or well with flowers and adorn yourself with pre-Christian tradition to avoid making your own appointment with... The Wicker Man!

This has been a very brief discussion of specific films within the occult horror film genre, but there are so many out there to enjoy that have inspired countless metal bands with their ritual and terror. There is a pleasure to be found in discovering these fantastic films that metal fans, who are by nature avid collectors, will enjoy just as much as buying heavy metal records. ⊛

CHOICE CUTS

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE MOVIES YOU MUST SEE!

BLACK SABBATH (1963 Mario Bava)

Classic Italian horror anthology featuring three separate stories of equally scary proportions! The first being a slasher, stalker-style psychological thriller akin to Hitchcock's 'Psycho'. The second, a story of occult vampirism in 19th century Russia, starring horror titan Boris Karloff as 'the Wurdaluk', and the third a story set in Victorian London featuring a thieving nurse terrorized by the undead spirit of the old lady she has stolen from!

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT (1968 Terence Fisher)

Classic occult horror from Hammer films based on the Dennis Wheatley novel of the same name. Starring Christopher Lee and Charles Gray. Wheatley was considered an expert on the practice of Satanism, the occult, black magic and also the supernatural. He is also said to have known Aleister Crowley.

THE WICKER MAN (1973 Robin Hardy)

Starring Christopher Lee, Edward Woodward, Britt Ekland and Ingrid Pitt, 'The Wicker Man' is not only one of the best horror films ever made, but also one of the best films ever made in general. Not to be confused with the abomination of a remake that was released in recent years; Nicholas Cage should be shot for crimes against horror.

COUNTESS DRACULA (1971 Peter Sasdy)

Starring Ingrid Pitt and made by Hammer films, it is not actually a Dracula film, merely given that title to give it more commercial appeal. It is a film about the legendary Countess Elizabeth Báthory in 17th Century Hungary and features a wonderful scene where the beautiful Ingrid Pitt is naked covered in blood.

THE DEVILS (1971 Ken Russell)

A very stylised film, with fantastic over-the-top sets built for the film starring Oliver Reed and Vanessa Redgrave. Unfortunately, it was panned by censors due to the graphic and shocking 'rape of Christ' orgy scenes, but it is an essential film for any serious occult horror film collector.

SUSPIRIA (1977 Dario Argento)

Classic Italian horror director Dario Argento created beautiful sets for 'Suspiria', a film about a coven of witches that run a dance school in Germany. The soundtrack was recorded by Argento favourites Goblin and is particularly special.

NIGHT OF THE DEMON (1957 Jacques Tourneur)

An adaptation of the M. R. James ghost story 'Casting The Runes'. A psychologist investigates a Satanic cult lead by the character of Dr Karswell, an unrepentant magician. The film features some brilliant 1950's-style special effects. It is an essential film in the collection for any M. R. James fans.

TWINS OF EVIL (1971 John Hough)

Quite possibly one of the most archetypal Hammer horror films ever made. It features a gothic setting, scenes of Satanic black rites, vampirism and also boobs… lots of boobs. Peter Cushing stars alongside the beautiful twins Mary and Madeleine Collinson. It is the third in Hammer's 'Karnstein trilogy', based on the book 'Carmilla' by Sheridan Le Fanu.

WITCHFINDER GENERAL (1968 Michael Reeves)

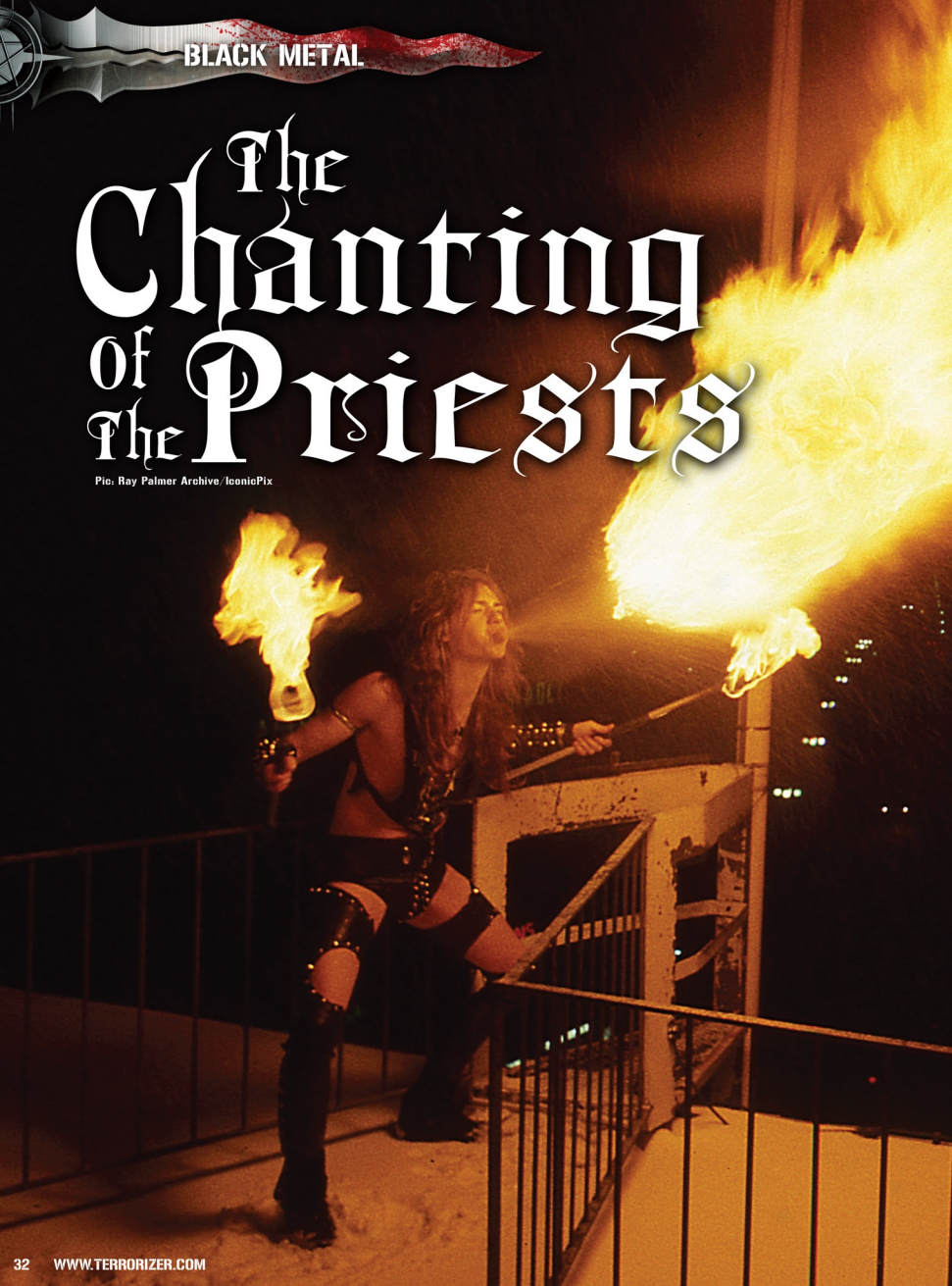
Classic British horror starring iconic actor Vincent Price as the historical character Matthew Hopkins, the self-appointed Witchfinder General. He was sent by God to purge the land of devilry and witchcraft, using sadistic methods of torture and execution to fulfill his misogynistic prejudice towards womankind.

NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE (1979 Werner Herzog)

A remake of the 1922 classic of the same name, the Herzog version should be held in as high a regard as the original. It is filled with atmosphere and is a truly tense and dark gothic horror film starring Klaus Kinski as Count Dracula. Herzog's eccentric flair coupled with Kinski's madness makes for a beautiful gothic horror film.

The Chanting of The Priests

Pic: Ray Palmer Archive/IconicPix



WHEN DID THE DEVIL CREATE BLACK METAL? TERRORIZER LOOKS BACK AT THE ROOTS OF EVIL AND CELEBRATES THE BEGINNINGS OF A GENRE THAT RE-SHAPED THE METAL WORLD FOREVER...

WORDS: JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS

As a countercultural movement, heavy metal always rested, by definition, on a set of standards typically considered shocking, condemnable or at the very least 'different' by mainstream society, both musically and from a lyrical/visual standpoint. However, and this is perhaps what most differentiates it, in terms of drive, from most other artistic currents, the relentless quest for extremity has also always been at the very heart of what it means to 'be' metal.

Many of the great leaps forward in metal, most of the big genre (r)evolutions, happened because bands took the music they listened to to a new level of extremity they felt was lacking. Being simply 'better' never really cut it for us, we need more than that. The little 'The 5,000 Fingers Of Dr. T' sample that opens Brutal Truth's 'Sounds Of The Animal Kingdom' is spot on: "Still not loud enough, still not fast enough!" Even today, more than 50 years after the first heavy metal records were released, we're still pursuing that extra mile of extremity, in every way possible – the most shocking anti-religious/political/gory/crazy lyrical concept, the harsher/higher-pitched/lower vocals, the more/less-notes-a-second one can play, the busiest 10-second song or the most minimalist 11-hour song, you name it, there's someone going for it. It's through that spirit that black metal was born, and the first wave of black metal, the term typically attributed to a group of pioneering bands of the '80s, is particularly special. Not only can its overwhelming influence be heavily felt today, as a quick glimpse at any reviews page of any metal mag will prove, with bands – and not just black metal bands, either – both drinking directly from the primordial fountain or of subsequent waves that stem straight from the first too, but also because it completely redefined heavy metal's standards of extremity in every sense – sonically, lyrically, conceptually and even behaviour-wise, nothing was ever the same.

Venom are obviously the first name that has to be thrown into this ring. Not only did they supply the black metal genre with its very name, but they were also the first to take it to that next level of extremity. As leader Cronos himself has told Terrorizer, he wanted to innovate, and he certainly didn't want to sound like Judas Priest or waddle in the poetry and roses themes of mainstream rock, so he naturally went the way of the Devil. But he did it with a conviction and bluntness that no-one had dared attempt before – for all its dabblings with occult imagery, witchcraft and even the Devil before, no-one had really ever donned leather and spikes, slapped a goat and a pentagram on their album cover, downtuned the fuck out of everything that was already perceived as heavy, and gruffly shouted stuff like *"I'm in league with Satan / I was raised in Hell / I walk the streets of Salem / Amongst the living dead"*. In that sense, black metal predates death metal and even thrash, which curiously isn't really the mental order we have of the evolution of things, mostly due to associating black metal with the second wave and with Norway. As for Venom, much has been made of how tongue-in-cheek they really were, how some of the humour was lost in translation to bands in other countries and how they really weren't grave-desecrating ghouls in real life, but that's seriously missing the point. What we got in our faces was the most extreme music cocktail anyone had ever heard, and that's what inspired entire generations of like-minded musical extremists to just go and do it. Anything else is just pointless nitpicking.

> "What we got in our faces was the most extreme music cocktail anyone had ever heard"

Of nearly equal importance is Bathory, a much murkier and shadier proposition, musically speaking. Though mainman (they were an actual band when they formed) Quorthon tackled pretty much the same themes as Venom on Bathory's iconic first four albums (goat's head on the cover of the first album and everything), the style was far removed from Venom's ugly, noisy thrashings, introducing chillingly cold, shrieking guitars and vocals. It felt more sinister, more real, and the fact that they stopped playing live shortly after the release of the second album only added to their distant, mysterious appeal. It's Bathory who provide the blueprint for most of what we've come to understand as black metal – there isn't a single band in the genre that doesn't owe some kind of debt to Quorthon's 1984-1988 output.

While Venom and Bathory form the main axis of evil of the first wave of black metal, two other bands also deserve a space at the unholy pedestal. One is Mercyful Fate. Very different to the aforementioned bands musically, dealing with their own extremity in a whole other way, through hard rock and even prog – it helped that the amount of talent in that line-up was staggering – and King Diamond's surreal vocal style, the Satanism depicted in the lyrics was very real (*"come into my coven and become Lucifer's child!"*, who can resist that?), and its impact was greatly amplified by King's looks. Taking corpsepaint away from KISS and into the extreme metal world, the Dane changed the visual landscape of black metal forever. Although not as sonically extreme as the others, the completely unique approach was still a great musical inspiration, particularly on the more technical-minded groups that would follow, such as Emperor, whose spectacular version of 'Gypsy' remains one of the greatest covers ever in metal. Even today, their influence is wide-ranging, and one doesn't need to go far to find it – one of the biggest bands of today, Ghost, lay much of their success on a Mercyful Fate foundation.

The other band that completes the unholy quartet of first-wave black metal is the short-lived Hellhammer, which of course would later mutate into Celtic Frost. Often ridiculed at the time, even by metal fans and press, the atavistic nature of their attack would prevail through the test of time. It'd be hard to find any extreme metaller today who doesn't worship the 'Apocalyptic Raids' EP (their only release, apart from the demos), and it has been instrumental in the shaping of not only black metal, but death metal too. After Tom G. Warrior and Martin Eric Ain switched to Celtic Frost, they would build upon this right after, erecting monuments of black/death/thrash greatness like 'Morbid Tales' and 'To Mega Therion' and becoming a universal influence for any extreme band.

Of course, as with any movement, there is a lot of life (and death!) outside the most important names, and even if the first wave of black metal isn't exactly the most expansive or productive of eras, a few others can be included for their influence and lasting effect. Even bands that aren't commonly perceived as black metal, like Sodom, whose horrendously brutal 'In The Sign Of Evil' EP and 'Obsessed By Cruelty' full-length debut are, for all intents and purposes, black metal albums. Displaying an amount of technicality and mastery of instruments close to zero, it's music that lives on passion and violent aggression alone, and that's really all it needs. Often forgotten, Bulldozer from Italy more or less picked up the ball when Venom started to drop it, around the mid-'80s, stylistically more or less halfway between Venom and Bathory and also depositing themselves at the feet of Satan, lyrically speaking. Still from Italy, Death SS, who no-one can accuse of not being serious in the occult themes employed on legendary releases such as 1983's 'Evil Metal', as Steve Sylvester (another corpsepaint pioneer in extreme music, incidentally) was a member of the Ordo Templi Orientis.

While there is good music and important movements to be found in any decade, it's easy to understand why the '80s are so particularly revered – if hard rock and proto-metal were defined and developed during the '60s and '70s, proper extreme metal was an invention of the '80s, through all the bands mentioned above and many others. ☠

WHO BETTER TO DISCUSS BLACK METAL'S SECOND ERA OF EVILNESS THAN CRADLE OF FILTH'S LEADER DANI FILTH? WE LET THE VOCALIST LOOSE WITH A PEN (SO TO SPEAK) HERE ARE THE RESULTS...

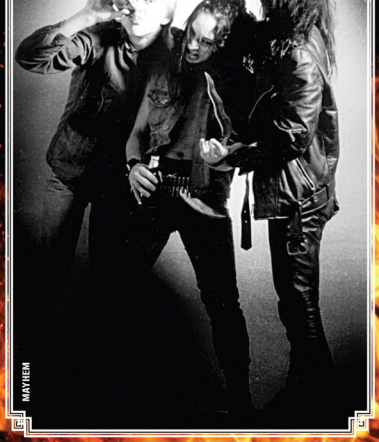
Good evening Ladies and Jellyspoons. Dani Filth, your resident ghoul guide here. I was approached by Darren Sadler, Terrorizer's Managing Editor, to write an informative piece on the origins of black metal, but quickly binned the idea due to possibly coming across as a bit of an unknowledgeable novice in these esteemed pages. Instead I decided to go down the personal recollections-of-the-time route, as you just can't go wrong with what you know.

The very first wave of this creepy, dark noisome music was unprecedented; most people in the mid-'80s probably thought black metal was the closest match on a colour chart for the re-spray of their Vauxhall Astra. At the time, metal either held a dalliance with the Devil or it didn't, with most rock bands venturing into Satanic territory at least once in their career, invoking the Devil's name to spice up their music, and, let's be quite frank, bank accounts.

If anything, England was the birthplace of the phenomenon, born of Geezer Butler's infatuation with the occult boom of the '70s and the subsequent NWOBHM that thundered in Sabbath's wake. Britain at that time was big on the sleaze of witchcraft and movie-fuelled Devil-worship, so it didn't take long for one thing to speed to the other and start going really dark.

Venom came across as an ugly, demonic punk KISS and a young Dani Filth licked it all up. He, sorry, I, even had a pet rabbit called Cronos! Initiated into metal via Ozzy and Mercyful Fate, to me, Venom were all performance and petrol, an explosion of fire that took everything to the logical extreme; harder, darker and faster! Thrash was burgeoning in a big way across the pond (in both directions, Germany and the Bay Area) and suddenly there was a glut of bands all expounding the darkside; Celtic Frost, Bathory, Possessed, Sodom, Destruction, Bulldozer – bands that an early Metal Forces would extol – before Slayer tore everyone a new arse in 1986 with the seminal 'Reign In Blood'. The magic back then, on Christmas day, of tearing back the wrapping paper and soaking in the imported vinyl sleeve was beyond compare... Christmas has just never been the same since!

> "Satan's rebellious spirit had re-entered the metal canon with bloody great hairy balls"


MAYHEM

In my humble opinion we have Deicide to thank for the second wave of black metal. There may be disgruntled bleating from the purists who'll name someone more terribly unfashionable but truth is, without the onset of this Floridian quartet's savage debut and Glen Benton spouting Anti-Christian rhetoric 24/7, the touch-paper for the scene would never have been lit in such a fashion, and with such a mouthpiece. Morbid Angel can accept their due of course, but not accompanied by such a tirade of blasphemy. Satan's rebellious spirit had re-entered the metal canon with bloody great hairy balls.

Death metal was the logical step forward for extreme music, deftly and insalubriously devouring lesser scenes before it like some giant carnivorous worm, but bands getting faster and more technical didn't necessarily imply greatness. I, for one, started listening to the European bands that were injecting melody and dark, emotive atmosphere into their music as well as the brunt and twin bass pedal

DARKTHRONE

assault. Swedish death metal in particular caught my attention with its penchant for soundtrack song arrangements and Iron Maiden-on-steroid harmonies; bands like Dismember, Edge Of Sanity, At The Gates, Eucharist, In Flames, Therion and later Dissection, Dark Tranquility and Naglfar amid many. Couple Thor's smorgasbord with the sombre gothic resonance of pioneer British doom bands bewailing similar fates, and this became the fertile plot from whence sprouted the second wave of black metal, slowly massing as it were behind proverbial gates, and quite a lot different than you might first imagine.

For a start there was a widespread European scene back between 1991 and 1993, little pockets like thorn bushes taking root in the most unlikeliest of nooks. Bands like Master's Hammer, Necromantia, Rotting Christ, Marduk, Immortal, Impaled Nazarene (most were Osmose records bands), Burzum, Root, Blasphemy, Beherit, Emperor, Darkthrone, Ancient Rites, Mayhem, Moonspell; all inhabited their own unique soundscapes, as most represented their countries. Black metal was truly underground at this time yet growing as a cultural entity, everybody linked by what you current cyborgs might call writing letters, tape-trading, word of mouth, flyers and if you were lucky, an actual show. (Fun fact- did you know that there were only three paying punters at our gig in Edinburgh with Emperor in 1993?).

But the dritt really hit the fan when a technical death metal band called Darkthrone suddenly turned Evil Viking overnight, and in the frost storm that followed, the newly risen Norwegian Circle squared off to the world in a blaze of hysteria, murder and church-burnings. Before becoming a pen-pal with Euronymous for a short while, Mayhem to me were a band the rock DJ Tommy Vance once played on his Friday Rockshow and liking the one track I heard, I'd been one of the few who'd acquired an original pink sleeved 'Deathcrush' (later reprinted in blood red, of course!) from Shades Records in London, only to be disappointed in what, at the time, was tantamount to a wishy washy dodgy thrash album. Then suddenly 'De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas' dropped like

DANI FILTH Pic: ZEN INOYA

The Second Coming

"We often joked that our stone churches didn't burn so well"

a fat black rock and everything kicked off.

First it was just whispers of an elite 'inner circle' of band members, running an extensive web of black metal terrorism, branding death metal 'Life Metal', scowling in woods and being pretty horrid... then, kaboom! Stavkirke steeples flamed like pagan beacons, telling the whole world that this wondrously forlorn music was deadly fucking serious. I remember in a matter of a few months, the scene went from a snigger to this wildfire craziness, with everyone on tenterhooks to see what would transpire next. It was easy to see how these teenagers got carried away amidst the whirl and rush of notoriety. And there we were. A fledgling Cradle of Filth, pre-'Principle' era, a real-life black metal band in your very own back garden fuck you very much. And with rude t-shirts.

I remember those inaugural years with nostalgia akin to reverence. I was living in a creepy Georgian manor house subdivided into flats, in a village so picturesque and antiquarian, that Tiziana from Misanthropy Records, upon visiting me, fell immediately in love with the place and moved to the other side of the adjacent graveyard. My wife and I had very little money back then, yet everything was infused with this incredible sense of magic and purpose. Albums were like monuments to be treasured and I suppose everything looked a little brighter when I was still in my teens (Cue wistful stare back through time...).

Cradle were busy writing for our debut that spring and summer and tore up quite a pace to eat through two drummers, a defunct forgotten album for Tombstone Records, an abandoned EP and several mental short tours of the UK (in Banbury with Cancer we bested the Emperor show by pulling only two punters. Two German Metalheads on holiday who'd unwittingly stumbled upon the show out of the blue! And in Banbury no less!).

It's ironic what you remember from back in the day (baring in mind that I am the right side of 40, don't push it)... In comparison to what curious fans often wish it to have been like. Undoubtedly we dabbled in drugs and the Occult, did some really funny and dangerous things being teenage and all that, though fortunately didn't get so caught up in it that arson and murder were involved, still retaining that British self-deprecating humour that kept us just some corn-chewing guys from East Anglia. And we often joked that our stone churches didn't burn so well anyways.

One night we travelled to the infamous site of a grave desecration in Clophill, Bedfordshire, where we proceeded to (yes you guessed it) mimic said events for a photoshoot. With the church overseeing the village from a hill, and us lighting it all up like a sinister Christmas with flaming torches, Diamanda Galás in the background screeching along to a mock Satanic ritual presided over by a bloody semi-naked girl, well, no wonder the locals didn't take too kindly to us. Another time we actually shat... well we better not go there.

Out of the mire of recording that first album in a mere 16 days in September's golden Dewsbury, there leaps endearing memories borne more out of sheer idiocy. For example; the scattering of drawing-pins in our label manager's bed one evening; All pretending to be dead on the floor when the owner of the house turned up in the middle of the night, absolutely furious with the noise... the little squeaks and farts of those first to giggle still haunts me to this day. Having the door slammed in our faces by a previous incarnation of Dave Pybus at Peaceville Records and, stealing lots of ornaments from the only local pub we were the only local strangers in. Twice.

Silly things like I say.

We did a regular thing during the autumn that year of listening to our newly-conceived album as part of a ritual night of ingesting magic mushrooms. Driving from my village on fogbound evenings became just a prelude to those long dark nights of the soul syncing 'Principle' up to various

DEICIDE Pic. ESTER SEGARRA

"Suddenly 'De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas' dropped like a fat black rock and everything kicked off"

gothic horror movies and drinking horrible purple tea. A single plastic toy skeleton hanging from an ornate lighting fixture becoming the omnipresent figurehead of Death himself on occasion.

The scene was very underground still, but the publicity surrounding the events in Norway started to seep through, tarnishing our lustrous reputation, which was a good thing for a black metal band, I used to say. We pursued occult knowledge but met with a serious bunch of hacks and middle aged men using thinly veiled ruses just to get women. Else they were simply nutjobs. The fever spread. We'd start playing shows on the continent where black metal was flourishing, especially at the Baroeg club in Rotterdam, eventually headlining our first festival in Penafiel in Portugal in the middle of a blisteringly hot summer, where we first began our close affinity with the chaps in Moonspell. After that I think we felt a lot more in common with the bands from the warmer climes rather than the Baltic North, as it was the first time several of us had been abroad anywhere warm, unless of course you count the Isle Of Wight. I won't prattle on any further like the ancient recollecting drunk at the end of the bar, but I mentioned a Christmas coloured by a mere album before, so I will finish my rant by taking a swift punt on another.

The end of 1993. I was working in my Nan's flower shop (?!) in London in the run-up to festivities and would pop over to Portobello road on the tube to harass Nihil, the label boss from Cacophonous Records. I remember buying two albums that had just that very day arrived from France, from the Vinyl Solution store downstairs. Immortal's 'Pure Holocaust' and Impaled Nazarene's 'Ugra Karma', two very different classics of the genre. I also received Coppola's 'Dracula' as a Christmas gift (this was right in the midst of the blockbuster gothic horror craze and Tim Burton's 'The Nightmare Before Xmas' was still haunting cinemas), which started my long love of movie soundtracks.

Visualise if you will, the imagination that was enflamed by the conjunction of these moving parts, with Christmas spent in a bedecked Georgian manor in the company of these wonderful albums, the sheer vibe of it all connecting with something vast and primitive that had walked before, but this time, this re-awakening of the dormant black metal spirit, I would grow to be an integral part of it. For better or for worse.

And the motto behind this gripping little yarn? Never lose sight of the magic.
Goodnight sweet children.

MIXTAPE

HELLHAMMER
'Satanic Rites'

WHY? From the oft-quoted '83 demo of the same name, this was Tom G Warrior and co. at their most evil and depraved.

FIND IT ON: 'Satanic Rites' (Prowling Death, 1983)

Bathory
'In Conspiracy With Satan'

WHY? Quorthon helped pioneer true musical blasphemy; showing his allegiance to the dark in this attack.

FIND IT ON: 'Bathory' (Black Mark Productions, 1984)

Dissection
'Night's Blood'

WHY? Nodtveidt's personal convictions were ultimately reflected in his fate; this track provides an insight into the darkest recesses of his infatuation with the sinister. Essential listening.

FIND IT ON: 'Storm of the Light's Bane' (Nuclear Blast, 1995)

Gorgoroth
'Incipit Satan'

WHY? A chugging and swirling incantation to Satan; Gaahl's unhinged vocals could only be a dedication to absolute darkness; Gorgoroth are pure satanic black metal, plain and simple.

FIND IT ON: 'Incipit Satan' (Nuclear Blast, 2000)

Cradle of Filth
'To Eve the Art of Witchcraft'

WHY? Their unique approach to black metal has often divided opinion on C.o.F, but on this record their salacious blasphemy leaves no doubt to their convictions.

FIND IT ON: 'The Principal of Evil Made Flesh' (Cacophonous, 1994)

DEICIDE
'Satan Spawn, The Caco-Demon'

WHY? The godfather of ungodly death metal Glen Benton needs no introduction, and his unmistakable roar on this track narrates the birth of Satan's malignant spawn.

FIND IT ON: 'Legion' (Roadrunner, 1992)

Mayhem
'Funeral Fog'

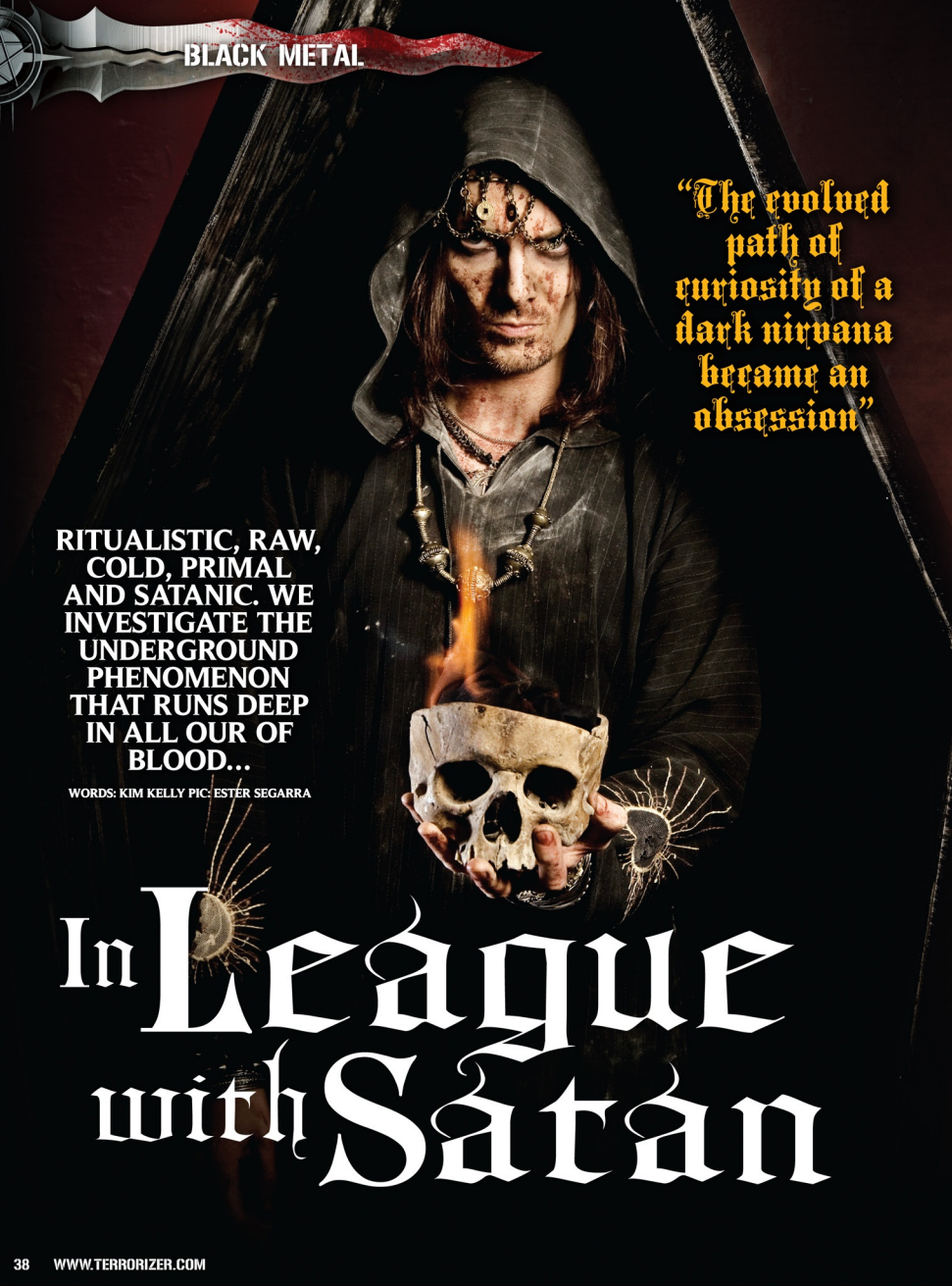
WHY? From the first note of the first track Mayhem's intensity and obsession with the macabre cultivates their signature atmosphere; the band at their finest.

FIND IT ON: 'De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas' (Deathlike Silence, 1994)

VENOM
'1,000 Days in Sodom'

WHY? About as old-school as it gets, Venom took us on a depraved and sordid journey through Sodom. A voyage of pain, suffering and madness, next stop Hell.

FIND IT ON: 'Welcome to Hell' (NEAT, 1981)



"The evolved path of curiosity of a dark nirvana became an obsession"

RITUALISTIC, RAW, COLD, PRIMAL AND SATANIC. WE INVESTIGATE THE UNDERGROUND PHENOMENON THAT RUNS DEEP IN ALL OUR OF BLOOD...

WORDS: KIM KELLY PIC: ESTER SEGARRA

In League with Satan

Black metal is the Devil's music, if there is such a thing. Any entity willing to lay claim to the vast canon of blasphemous savagery that this particularly nasty strain of extreme metal has spat out over the past couple decades has got to be a pretty dodgy character to begin with, and Ol' Scratch is surely the dodgiest of them all. Ever since the genre first sputtered and stumbled into life on the fretboards of a handful of British miscreants and unsmiling Scandinavians, the scourge of Satanism, black magick, and the occult have coursed through its collapsing veins. As with any extreme movement, the levels of seriousness are staggered; one man's grimoire is another band's songbook, and only a select few have managed to combine the twain in any kind of convincing manner. Bands from all across the spectrum – from Mortuary Drape and Svartidaudi to Profanatica and Blasphemy – regard the creation and execution of black metal as a ritual, a form of worship or of proselytizing, and the burning depths of their passion for the dark arts shines through while less invested types are able to laugh off the more serious implications of the aesthetic. Whether we're talking Watain's rotting pigsblood, Sarcofago's blasphemous dedication, or Jon Nödtveidt's Satanic suicide, the song remains the same. There's a line drawn in the sand, and only you may choose which side you're on. Can black metal truly exist without the presence of an occult fixation or Satanic oath? As far as we can tell, it has done just fine for decades, but we decided to poll a few luminaries to see just how big of an impact black metal's Beezlebub-friendly tendencies have had.

For as many grim-faced folk who've told me quite seriously that black metal's link to Satan is paramount, there's someone else scoffing at the idea and swigging a beer. Archgoat have proclaimed: "Black metal is to me the musical aspect of my philosophy. For me black metal is the picture of the person who created the hymn. That is the reason why I have such a hard time with the new black metal bands who do this on purely on the grounds of musical expression rather than philosophical. There can't be real black metal if there is not Satanic belief behind the band."

R. Forster of Blasphemy vehemently insists: "Black Metal is Satanic! This was laid out quite clearly by the originators of the genre, but of course the infiltrators and wimps corrupted everything!" and Horna's Shatraug told us previously that: "To me there can be only black metal or just extreme music. There is no in-between and if you have no faith, don't pretend you do. We have millions of Christians already doing that."

However, there's plenty of room for contention – especially when you consider the lessons of the past. For example, Venom mightn't have really meant to offer tribute to the Horned One with songs like 'In League With Satan' or 'Satanachist', but they put on a damn good show.

"I write songs about the world we live in, good and bad," says Cronos. "I never wanted to just write Venom songs about drinking whiskey and your wife leaving you with the dog; I often use Satan as a metaphor and this enables me to write about subjects that make people think and ask questions. Black metal is not just about fire and brimstone, but as the saying goes... the Devil has the best tunes."

With Cronos firmly representing the 'Satan as metaphor' camp, we turn to consult another seminal force in black metal's cursed evolution: VON mastermind Venien. As the progenitor of one of North America's most influential and evil-minded extreme music hallmarks, his insights were illuminating, to say the least.

"The roots of my evil ignorance and selfishness had evoked Satan and other dark things into my young psyche at one time or the other," he began. "Ultimately, it became a dominant presence and an essential step in my evolution, but in the end dictates nothing. The evolved path of curiosity of a dark nirvana became an obsession of mine and it reflects itself within the writings and music in the grand scheme of that chapter of VON. In my experience through the years, the hidden and obscure worlds under the layers of modern society are real and for the most part secret to most. My path is to expose and transmit rage, dread, savagery, cold truths and evil and darkness within us all and some specific scenarios that some act out in the bowels of the shadows."

Echoing the darkness Venien touched upon and leaving the Devil to his own devices, we then head south to the Mediterranean to shed a little light on the impetus behind long-running Italian diehards Mortuary Drape. Their live shows take the form of elaborate rituals replete with candles, robes and a velvet-clad altar, and they're a sterling example of the 'practice what you preach' school.

"We decided to baptise our style as 'black-occult metal'," an unnamed ghoul explains. "It's a mission and have a path already wrote in the past... It's showed by the fact that, although the band has had many line-up changes, our message never changed; our lyrics are focused on personal experiences or occult and exoteric themes. Our albums are full of those kind of experiences, if you read carefully our lyrics you will find a guiding principle and some repeated words, this means that also our last lyrics keep on talking about the same message since 1984, namely two years before the creation of the band."

Whether we're discussing the magickal bent of Arckanum's chaos gnosticism, poring over Quorthon's 'Necromancy', pondering Absu's numerological secrets, debating the merits of Pete Helmkamp's Nietzschean 'Heretic Supremacy' theory or even venturing 'Through The Occult Veil' with that Graveland doofus, it's obvious that mankind's fascination with evil is allowed a perfect manifestation within the biting chords and bitter howls that this hellish racket provides. How we choose to interpret that primal urge, though, is each individual's cross to bear. ☠

MIXTAPE

ARCHGOAT
'Black Crusade'

WHY? Purveyors of Finnish blasphemy, Archgoat demand that the listener "Spread/ The Flame/ Crush/ Christianity"

FIND IT ON: 'Whore of Bethlehem' (Hammer Of Hate, 2006)

WATAIN
'Sworn To the Dark'

WHY? Some of Satan's most dedicated and prominent sons at the moment, Watain's fury and disdain for the weak is unrivalled; Erik Danielsson and co. really are sworn to the dark.

FIND IT ON: 'Sworn To the Dark' (Season of Mist, 2007)

SARCOFAGO
'Satanic Lust'

WHY? Exploding out of Brazil in 1987, this slab of fierce satanic rage helped spawn a genre and showed that total aural sacrilege was not simply a European business.

FIND IT ON: 'I.N.R.I' (Cogumelo Records, 1987)

BLASPHEMY
'Ritual'

WHY? Spewing forth invocations to Satan and demands of virgin sacrifice, Blasphemy churn out the kind of demonic nifflery that would have Beelzebub himself banging his head.

FIND IT ON: 'Fallen Angel of Doom...' (Wild Rags Records, 1990)

MORTUARY DRAPE
'Obsessed by Necromancy'

WHY? A contender for the throne of truly blackened death metal, Mortuary Drape drag you to a deathly ritual and waste little time in conjuring demonic powers through blistering solos and ungodly blasts.

FIND IT ON: 'Secret Sudaria' (Nazgul's Eyrie Productions, 1997)

DARKTHRONE
'Cromlech'

WHY? Fenriz and co's death metal debut can be often overlooked for their more notable black metal output, however this record is still replete with Satanic imagery; "Yes, flee over the River Styx, and join the dead with joy"..

FIND IT ON: 'Soulside Journey' (Peaceville, 1991)

SODOM
'Outbreak of Evil'

WHY? Don't let the broken English fool you, this E.P from thrash masters Sodom brings demons, death and destruction into the mortal realm, hell-bent on wrecking chaos, all to the sound of Teutonic shredding and scorching licks.

FIND IT ON: 'In the Sign of Evil' (Steamhammer, 1984)

SHINING
'Hail Darkness Hail'

WHY? Niklas Kvarforth pens a modern day classic about a love for darkness wrapped up in this seven-minute epic.

FIND IT ON: 'Redefining Darkness' (Spinefarm/ Universal, 2012)

"If Black Sabbath were Hammer Horror, Venom are 'The Evil Dead'"

CRONOS

MODERN DAY METAL WOULD BE NOWHERE IF IT WASN'T FOR A MOTLEY CREW OF GEORDIES WHO CREATED BLACK METAL AND WENT TO WAR WITH SATAN. FOR OVER 30 YEARS VENOM HAVE INSPIRED AND CREATED SOME OF THE BEST METAL TUNES EVER. LEADER OF THE PACK CRONOS DISCUSSES IT ALL!

WORDS: ROB SAYCE PIC: ZEN INOYA

FINDING THE DARKNESS...

"My interest in the darker side of music has always been there, from the early days of listening in general. I remember hearing Elvis Presley when I was little and that lyric he had: *"I'm evil, so don't you mess around with me"*. I was thinking, 'Oh, Elvis is really cool, he's evil!' Getting into Sabbath and all that, The Rolling Stones and 'Sympathy For The Devil', backwards masking, I loved all of it right from the start. I've always been very interested in the black arts and the left hand path; that world is something I'm extremely comfortable with."

THE EARLY DAYS OF VENOM...

"I worked in a recording studio before Venom, and saw bands every day. I had to ask myself, 'Where are the innovators?' Nobody seemed to be doing anything new or groundbreaking. That's one of the reasons Venom decided to downtune, we started off doing cover songs like every other band, so we tuned down to C flat and D to make it sound different, more evil and heavy. As much as the devil has the best tunes, there is so much subject matter there, when you think about it terms of stories and poetry. Mainstream rock stuff is, 'Fell in love, she left': you're fairly limited on where you can go. With what we do, it's not just about saying, 'Satan's in Hell', there are so many other aspects, from witchcraft to the psychology of the occult. I think the subject matter's endless."

CULTURE SHOCKS...

"Anything new scares the shit out of people, they hate change. The heaviest thing on the scene when we came out was Motörhead, and I love them, a fantastic band, but they're rock and roll, not metal. When we came out we scared the crap out of everyone because no-one had seen anything like it before. I just thought, 'Well, people don't get it yet', and I've been proven right. There were loads of Christian idiots going, 'You're going to go to Hell', and I was like, 'Cool!' If I can annoy some fucking idiot like that, it's brilliant. We put all that controversial stuff in there, 'Kill the newborn baby', and all that, purely for shock value. If Black Sabbath were Hammer Horror, Venom are 'The Evil Dead'. It's a progression, you know?"

BLACK METAL...

"I felt kind of justified when the whole black metal thing came out, that put a huge fucking smile on my face. I got sent all the early demos from Burzum and Mayhem and I loved it, it was amazing. We'd progressed quite a bit by that point, with dual guitars and keyboards and these bands sounded like 1979 Venom all over again. I just thought, 'Fucking hell, these kids finally get it!' It was about getting down and dirty with it, changing the rules, having fun. Some of those Burzum demos... it sounds like the guys aren't even playing the same song! I loved that. Mayhem, that maelstrom of noise, it was just some young kids having the best time and creating this incredible music. I thought the whole scene was amazing, it was absolutely incredible. The church burning thing was very unfortunate and I'm sure those guys will regret it for the rest of their lives. I know the guys in Mayhem very well and I give them credit for still making albums, for getting through those hard times. We never made such a stupid mistake as that, to be tarnished as criminals. It took away from the music, which is a real fucking shame. They just went too far and it's part of their legacy now."

INFILTRATING THE MAINSTREAM...

"We made a TV advert for 'At War With Satan'. We were at a stage where we had a bit of money and our intention was genuinely just to get something out there so that the general public would know what's going on. We'd already been played on Radio 1 by the likes of Tommy Vance and Mike Read so people knew the name, but we hit a brick wall of hypocrisy. The reasons they gave for not playing the advert were pathetic. One of the lines in the advert was a lyric that just said, 'Feared by the masters', and they claimed that we were saying 'bastards'. We tried to explain that as Geordies we wouldn't pronounce 'bastards' so it sounded like 'masters', but they wouldn't have it. At the time people like Madonna were coming out, too. All the people in charge of the TV companies were about 95 and regular churchgoers, so we had no chance. It was fucking gutting. They point blank refused, so what could we do? It was a real shame really, because at the time even Motörhead were on Top Of The Pops! I don't think we'd have got on there."

VENOM'S LEGACY...

"If Venom came out two hundred years ago, we'd have been burned as witches! We're not controversial anymore, we're just a fucking heavy black metal group. I was going through YouTube the other day and saw some of the latest stuff from Dimmu Borgir... fucking incredible! Their shows and videos are fucking fantastic, so it's great to see people are still progressing this theme, taking that darkness into new areas. People have become a bit more grown up about it now, seeing it as the image that it is rather than looking for a hidden agenda. It's just a form of entertainment that people want. We once got advised to put a disclaimer out that our music was for people over the age of 18, but it seemed silly to me; it's obvious it's just a bit of fun! There's no foreseeable end to where this can go, though. It's all about questioning our mortality, that's at the root of it. This music can take you into areas that some people don't want to confront. That's a powerful thing. I have thousands of lyrics that I've not yet used, thousand of riffs and beats and ideas. There'll be piles of stuff left when I die, there's so much still to do."

www.VenomsLegions.com

"We are representing the dark tradition"

DISSECTION

ON THEIR 'REBIRTH' TOUR, DISSECTION'S LATE FRONTMAN JON NÖDTVEIDT SPOKE TO TERRORIZER ABOUT MUSIC AND DARK PHILOSOPHIES...

WORDS: GUY STRACHAN PIC: ESTER SEGARRA

Jon Nödtveidt was noticeably different to most of his contemporaneous band members. For one, he was generally content to let the music do the talking; Dissection were one of the few bands of their style who were unconcerned with image, eschewing make-up, studs and spikes, and at the same time playing with a precision and an atmosphere that left many, many others standing in the dust.

The first 'major' black metal to cross over onto a bigger label, their signing to Nuclear Blast in 1994 and the subsequent 'Storm Of The Light's Bane' album gained the band much deserved attention and for all the bleak, evil atmosphere of his music and Satanic outlook of his lyrics, Jon rarely used the press to discuss his beliefs.

Despite the band's success, stories slowly began to circulate that Jon's behaviour (including his involvement in the Misanthropic Luciferian Order) was becoming increasingly extreme and causing problems for the stability of the band. This was confirmed when Dissection were forced to pull out of the Dynamo festival in the summer of 1997 and Jon's subsequent arrest and charging with being an accessory to murder. Sentenced to ten years in prison in December 1997, he passed the time studying and writing songs and putting the band back together, so that when he was released in 2004, Dissection went straight back on the road for the 'Rebirth Of Dissection' tour. On the final date of that tour, a friendly, polite yet intense Jon discussed the rebirth and his beliefs, before taking the stage at the Bradford Rio.

HOW DID THE NEW LINE-UP COME TOGETHER?

"We came to the point where Bard Faust felt that he couldn't stand behind the [Satanic] concept, then Tomas [Asklund] dropped me an e-mail; he used to play in Dark Funeral before and was always looking for a serious Satanic band that could project his satanic visions. So we shared the same kind of visions; I think we saw this directly and we discussed what we wanted to do, musically and as a band. Then Brice [LeClercq] sent a videotape and we had a meeting and just talked about Satanism and philosophy mainly, you know, and I thought that it was obvious that he shared a lot of goals and visions so we tried things out in a rehearsal situation. That worked out from the first moment. I think that's the case with all of the members of Dissection today; that when we came to a meeting and tried out the practical rehearsal situation everything clicked at the very first moment. That's what we all felt and that's why I can say that we have found the ultimate Dissection line-up."

SO IT WAS A UNITED PHILOSOPHY THAT MADE THINGS WORK?

"It's not just that; it was on the level that we all clicked personally and as a band. The same happened with Set [Teitan] when he came to Sweden, he worked out right away. We were in contact for one and a half years, but when we finally met it was clear to all of us that this guy had to be in [the] band. For us, there was no option in compromising with any of our demands, if we had to do that we knew it would be something that we would come to regret in the future with things not working out as we would wish so I think that we were very lucky to have our roads crossing at the same moment."

PEOPLE SEEM TO BE QUITE SURPRISED AT THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE 'MAHA KALI' SINGLE. WERE YOU DRAWING ON THE DARK SIDE OF OTHER RELIGIONS FOR SUBJECT MATTER?

"Yes, definitely. I think Satanism for me is a subject that includes all dark traditions of all religious backgrounds, for me this is a name for the dark traditions as a whole no matter what background it is from. Because it is a spiritual reality, not anything that is bound to any specific word or form but people have tried to describe this spiritual reality no matter where they have been living and no matter when they were living without having contact with people from other places on the planet; using different words to describe the same thing. It's words that try to describe something deeper; for me, the word Satan, which is a Hebrew word meaning 'opponent', to me this word stands for a power that is an opponent to the cosmic order. In all ancient traditions, in all religions you can find the dark powers that stand for the same thing; they have different names but it's the same essence, so that's what we are representing as a band. To make it easy, we are representing the dark tradition."

WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND THE "ANTI-COSMIC METAL OF DEATH" BANNER IN YOUR LOGO?

"The definition of 'cosmic order' is the physical, material universe, which is a prison for the spirit, because the physical and material is limited and the spiritual is in essence formless and unlimited, but in this physical universe the spirit is captured, and that's one of the main goals for the Satanist; for somebody who walks on the left hand path to liberate the spirit from these cosmic chains so Satanism is an anti-cosmic power. It's an impulse that counteracts the cosmic structure and creation and it's part of the chaos that everything comes from and that everything will return to at the point of total dissolution. I think this is what it is all about: liberating the spirit from the limitations of a cosmic existence, to transcend and to reach back to the pan-dimensional and unlimited state of original, primeval chaos."

SO ONE ASPECT OF SATANISM TO YOU IS A FREEING OF THE MIND?

"Yes, definitely, because in this world we are all living with a blindfold and it's about taking away the blindfold and seeing beyond the illusions that darken our minds."

WERE YOU STUDYING A LOT IN PRISON?

"Yes, but mostly I think I had time to get distance and a perspective to where I was going. It's of course important to study but the most important thing is to put it into practice, as without practical knowledge you don't really learn anything; you can have a theory and you can know and recite the theory, but if you don't have that practical knowledge then you really don't know anything about it. I think that the most important thing is to walk the sinister path yourself. That is what I was doing with my life previous to, and during, my prison sentence and now. All these experiences led me to where I am today, and to reconnect to what you were asking, yes I had a lot of time to study and think in prison, but I think the actual experience of walking the sinister path itself was the most important thing." ®

www.Disecction.se

ABBATH

TEXAN BLACK METALLERS ABSU MAKE NO SECRET OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE OCCULT INFLUENCES THEIR ART; MAINMAN PROSCRIPTOR MCGOVERN DELVES INTO THE DETAILS...

WORDS: KIM KELLY

As y'all might have noticed by now, this special issue is focused on the occult, magick, and mythology and its connection to extreme metal, and it's no secret whatsoever that Texan black metal institution Absu are at the absolute forefront of that field. It's tough to even know where to start, given head honcho Proscriptor McGovern's well-documented and wideranging interests in a cornucopia of disciplines and philosophies, from Kabbalah to Gnosticism to Sumerian mythology and his own Pagan Celtic roots. His labyrinthine, often impenetrably complex lyrics delve even deeper into these realms, stretching from the emerald hills of Tara into the eyes of Ioldánach in an intimidating sprawl. Terrorizer braved the storms of Cythrául to seek an answer: what is the common thread binding together all of Proscriptor's far-flung theories and arcana?

"The answer to this question is mysticism, yet otherworldliness," the man himself reveals. "Throughout the 22 years of Absu's existence, I have been able to effectively interact the aforementioned philosophies with not only my lyrical content, but also my everyday life. My objective has been to network the science of numerology with Kabbalah into Gnosticism – to escape from the materialistic world and enter a magic(k)al one. Now, this is where I connect my fascination with both Sumerian and Mesopotamian Mythology. Being that the band moniker of Absu is derived from this mythos, I envision the universe as a closed dome surrounded by a primordial saltwater sea. Underneath the terrestrial globe, which formed the base of the dome, existed an underworld and a freshwater ocean: Absu. The captivation of Celtic Mythology is strictly adored due to my ancestral attributions of both Scottish and Irish lineage. Like the Sumerians/Mesopotamians, the Celts also believed there was dismal underworld, which is called Cythrául. In summarisation, this is the connexus between all four subjects."

Clearly, the man is no novice. He speaks of years spent availing himself of the writings of Kenneth Grant, John Dee, Dion Fortune, Crowley, and many others, and makes no bones about the drastic effects that certain mind-expanding drugs have had upon his spiritual formation (begun at quite a tender age – let's hope his mum isn't reading this).

"Beginning at the age of 12, I started delving into hallucinogenic/ mind-altering substances," he explains, "which lead myself into Ordo Templi Orientis, (O.T.O.) Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Thelemic Magic(k), Enochian Magic(k), Tasseomancy and Necromancy. After discovering the Cthulhu Mythos and the Book of Eibon, this too led to my fascination with Sumerian and Mesopotamian mythology. After the release of Absu's debut album, 'Barathrum: V.I.T.R.I.O.L.' [1993], I then became beguiled by the tracing of our ancestral attributions, (mainly Scotch/ Irish) which formulated the lyrical conceptions of Celtic lore, heavily engrossed on all albums up to 'Tara' [2001]. I can proudly say hallucinogenic substances not only opened the gates to my mind's eye, but it has scholastically made me a stronger student throughout high school and college. Psychedelics can, however, cause some permanent changes in an individual and I feel am walking, talking evidence of that. I'm going to attempt to lay that effect out."

Exhibit A – Realisations

"The most common after effect of using a psychedelic is the change in personality brought about due to inspirations that come during the course of that journey. For me, every trip has been nothing but prosperous, yet a new appreciation for life. I have been able to sort out new and valuable ideas, in the same way I sort ideas out from what I have read, studied or heard in music. Again, this has been a positive entity and has provided forms of permanent enlightenment. I strongly believe that long-term use can result in permanent personality disorder, so I am not encouraging anybody to try hallucinogenic substances. Nevertheless, it has assisted me, so if you feel like test-driving the psychedelic excursion, be careful and moderate your intake."

> "The majority of my occult-related exercises are executed in complete isolation"

Exhibit B – The Comprehension Of Gnosticism & Thelemic Magic(k) VS. Hallucinogens

"I'll be quite honest: I experimented with peyote and LSD up to the age of 18. During this period, I discovered an altered state of consciousness that most esoteric theories are necessary for working most forms of magic(k). My Gnostic/ Thelemic state was achieved when my mind was focused on only one thought and all other thoughts were thrust outward. I feel like I developed my own way of reaching this state, as those thoughts were experienced during a Gnostic/ Thelemic practice and then forgotten quickly afterwards, bypassing the 'psychic censor'. Then, magic(k)al manipulation of reality was sent to the subconscious, rather than the conscious mind, where it was enacted through means unknown to the conscious mind. Perplexed yet? Yeah, me too."

By now, we're about as perplexed by Proscriptor's explanations as the Siberian steppe is "a tad chilly" in January, but his passion for the subject matter comes through loud and clear. He's a Southern boy at heart, raised in Oklahoma and settled in Texas, and given what we've seen in these fair states, there's not much call for weird-looking folk, especially the type that chose to adorn themselves with strange symbols and black clothes. Of his occult upbringing, he says only, "It was extremely mundane to be quite honest with you. The majority of my occult-related exercises were/ are executed in complete isolation." Now, Proscriptor radiates a calm, steely strength; there's a fire burning within those dark eyes, and many more secrets than we could ever unearth. He seems wholly satisfied with the path he's chosen.

"It has been nothing but prosperity for myself, practicing Thelemic, Gnostic, Goetic and Ceremonial Magic(k)," he confirms. "My encounters have been progressive steps and expanding the square footage of my conscious and subconscious kingdoms. I am spiritual, but I am my own god. The magic(k) I delve in has aided myself in leaping from mundane earthly consciousness to cosmic awareness."

Most black metal bands that dabble in the occult only scratch the tip of the iceberg, or stop at Satanism, but Proscriptor and his various cohorts have always delved far, far deeper. Some of the more serious-minded occult bands proclaim their live gigs to be rituals, chances to commune with whatever spirit might possess them and pay tribute to those which they seek to honour. Absu shows are far from ceremonial, but the message remains. Is his work with Absu a form of worship?

"Drawing upon magic(k) has definitely made myself obtain initiation into the greater mysteries of not only planet Earth, but the universe. I believe initiation is a sacred process in which both transmission of a higher octave and empowerment of the soul can occur in a step-by-step process. Not only is Absu a form of worship, but it is simply a way of life and presently, there is no escape from it. Mythology is the study of myths and are stories that have significance to a culture (or species), fables that address fundamental and difficult questions that human beings ask: who and what am I, where did I come from, why am I here, how should I live, what is the right thing to do, what is the universe, how did it all begin? Mythology is a story that is peopled by great men and women; by forces of good and evil; by animals, large and small; by trees, the sea and the wind; and by giants, gods/ goddesses and other supernatural beings. Mythology was created before art, before language or the written word."

For such a metaphysically-inclinded soul, only one last question can possibly remain: what will happen to you after you die?

"If everything goes as planned, metamorphosis will transmute my phantom into serpent-like form and album sales will (hopefully) increase."

That last bit was a joke, but everything else Proscriptor has shared herein has been deadly serious. Watch your back, and remember: never blow out the Eastern candle. ⊛

www.Facebook.com/OfficialAbsu

The High Priestesses

You've studied and been moved by the teachings of the Satanic Bible. You've watched enough Anton LaVey documentaries and pseudo-black masses on YouTube that your computer smells like candles and incense. Not only that, you've also just finished reading Napoleon Hill's 'Think And Grow Rich' and studied the careers of Kim Fowley, Berry Gordy and Lou Pearlman (the guy who created and backed '90s boy bands like *NSYNC and the Backstreet Boys). Your thoughts have turned to putting together the ultimate Satanic super-group. You can't go wrong including any of these Satanic Sisters and Hell's Belles

Words: Kevin Stewart-Panko

JINX DAWSON

(COVEN)

Let's begin where it all started. Not only were Coven the first overtly occult and deliberately Satanic rock band, they featured the haunting, operatic vocals of Jinx Dawson, who was the real deal. Raised in an artistic family who also participated in behind-closed-doors secret societies, Jinx studied classical voice training from an early age and was imbued in evil from the beginning. With her flowing floor-length gowns and flaxen locks, she led their ritualistic, psychedelic and progressive music. Not only that, but Jinx has been widely credited for being the first to use the throwing of the horns hand/finger salute – yes, pre-Dio – in praise of the dark lord.

Pic: ESTER SEBARRA

ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM

(PURSON)

Taking a huge page of parchment from Coven's book is Purson. Featuring the throaty vocals and warm guitar riffs of Rosalie Cunningham, Purson play what they describe as 'progpsychgothfolkglampoprock'. This Big Smoke-based outfit not only make music that sounds like the devil and exhibits his/her impish and humorous side through Ouija boards and venom, but they also play proto '60s jammolas with songtitles like 'Leaning On A Bear'. Their debut 'The Circle And The Blue Door' is out now. If you want to go to Hell with a smile on your mug, let Rosalie and her charges lead the way.

Pic: AL OVERDRIVE

F THE MOUTH OF SATAN

(THE DEVIL'S BLOOD)

Dutch occult/psychedelic rockers The Devil's Blood never quarelled a single moment about their devotion to the horned one. As of a couple months ago, however, the band split up, an announcement cryptically explained via a press release that was as terse as it was pretentious. Attention impresarios: Farida 'F. The Mouth of Satan' Lemouchi is a free agent and possibly looking for work. She was never one to say much to the press during her five-year tenure fronting the band, but it's not like she had to, with her visually striking, blood-soaked image and the evil sidelong glances she mastered.

LIZ BUCKINGHAM
(ELECTRIC WIZARD)

She may only be considered an honorary Brit in the eyes of this country's immigration and citizenship departments, but fuck it. As Slayer once said, 'Evil Has No Boundaries'. If you ever need a guitarist to ooze out the sludgiest, most molasses-paced rusty lawnmower blade riffs using a tone akin to swamp gas being lit on fire, Liz Buckingham should forever be your go-to. Her pedigree while playing in the colonies is unfuckwithable (13, Sourvein), as is her role as the settling force that seemingly straightened out Electric Wizard's post-Greening and Bagshaw collapsing clusterfuck. We're also betting Liz and her man Jus Oborn have enough of a collection of all the real and simulated black mass videos (on VHS, of course!) to keep you busy for weeks.

CHELSEA WOLFE

Even though she hails from realms outside the metal world, Sacramento's Chelsea Wolfe has resonated with the darker side of the musical world because of her inherent dark side. Tagged as 'drone metal art folk', the urban, witchy-looking Wolfe swims in a seemingly perpetual depressive mood and has used her breathy voice, weepy acoustic guitar and sullen piano playing to attract attention from Roadburn curators and attendees as well as those looking for a fireside feel to their dalliances with evil. Be careful: it's always the quiet ones you have to watch out for.

JESS
(JESS & THE ANCIENT ONES)

Looking like she just stepped out of a world cross-pollinated by her kindred spirit Jinx Dawson, master macramé artist Rita Huang and Aleister Crowley himself, Jess & The Ancient Ones command center stage attention for their brand of ritual magic, and chanteuse Jess leads the party like a succubus with the most awesome of siren songs. The Finns' music is majestic, up tempo psychedelia and Jess' pipes belie the commercial nature of her Ann and Nancy Wilson-meets-Janis Joplin influences, to sound like she was next in line behind Robert Johnson at the crossroads with her soul and a hastily pre-arranged contract in hand.

SERA TIMMS & KELLY JOHNSTON
(IDES OF GEMINI)

While most of us are cheating Carpal Tunnel Syndrome on a daily basis to bring you the glossy slice of metallic literature you're currently spilling beer on, the focus on Ides Of Gemini has been one of our own – the inimitable J. Bennett – making the move from critic to those who get criticised. However, the band was actually designed by J. to revolve around the sultry, airy voice of vocalist/bassist Sera Timms. Additionally, the spacious and ambient tub thumping of Kelly Johnston acts as primitive foil to the charred, slow motion post-punk apocalypse on their 'Constantinople' debut. The trio may not be howling on about Satan, but Sera's voice is probably scaring someone, somewhere as you read this.

SHANDRA FREDRICK
(DEMON LUNG)

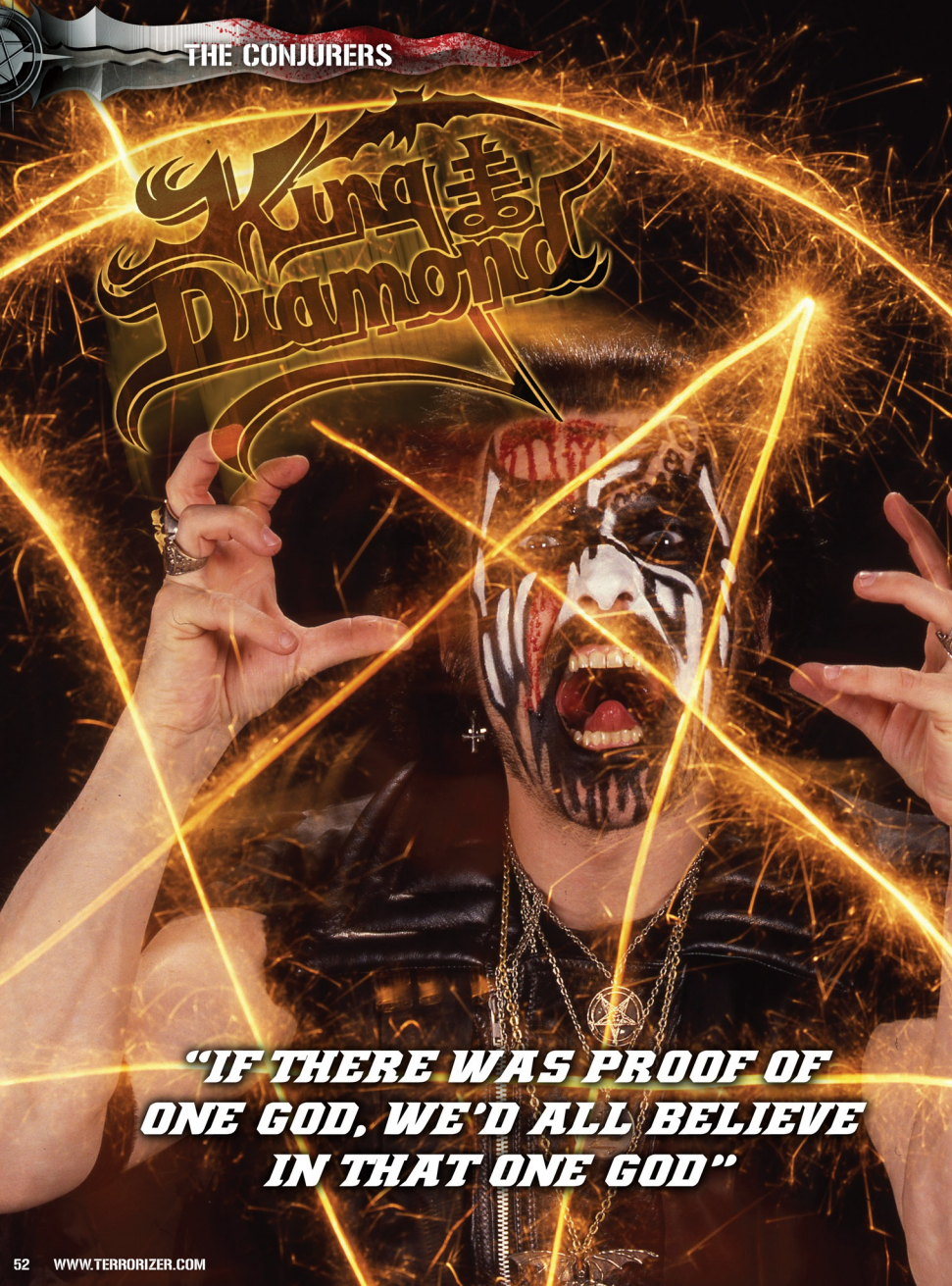
Recently signing on Candlelight's dotted line, Demon Lung hail from that edge of the universe where the occult, Paganism, a love of and respect for 4:20 friendly herb and gothic-looking women fronting hirsute stoner sludge all collide in the name of metal. Part of what sets vocalist Shandra Fredrick and her bandmates apart from the pack is that Demon Lung hail from Las Vegas, the epicentre of American vice. Here, the hedonism that surrounds Shandra in the city of sanctioned sin is represented through her moody and earthy voice. They have a demo available, but are working on their debut for Candlelight that promises to put listeners in the mood. For what? That's entirely your call, but whatever Demon Lung are doing isn't going to stay in Vegas much longer.

ALIA O'BRIEN
(BLOOD CEREMONY)

Ever since Jethro Tull beat out Metallica for the Grammy's inaugural metal award in 1988, metal has had a hate-on for the flute. And why not? As an instrument, it's symbolic of old fogies afraid to live anywhere but behind the times. And Hell, you can't even plug the damned thing into a distortion pedal! But played properly and in the right context, as in the way Alia O'Brien of Toronto's Blood Ceremony does, the flute can sound as nefarious as anything else. Alia, also via her beguiling organ playing and smoky vocals, it would seem, has been sent to this mortal coil to play the piper, drawing in and corrupting indie rock hipsters and non-believing metalheads. We thank her for her shadowy talents and presence.

JEX THOTH
(SABBATH ASSEMBLY)

Her name alone is like pure evil tumbling off the lips of those who dare to speak it. Say 'Jex Thoth' when Satan's in the house and it tents his trousers. Considering that Jex Thoth (aka Jessica Bowen) fronts a psychedelic doom band obsessed with mythology, ancient religions, Paganism and all the stuff that wakes Hollywood's living dead, this hardly comes as a surprise . For Jex/Jessica, exploration of the world beneath our world is what matters, and doing so while crooning music that would have had her burned at the stake in a more superstitious age is where it's at.



"IF THERE WAS PROOF OF ONE GOD, WE'D ALL BELIEVE IN THAT ONE GOD"

HEAVY METAL ICON AND DARK ÜBERLORD KING DIAMOND REFLECTS ON A CAREER BUILT ON SATAN AND MAKE-UP, AND HOW LIFE-CHANGING MOMENTS CAN CHANGE PERSPECTIVES IN THE WORLD

WORDS: KEVIN STEWART-PANKO PIC: GEORGE CHIN/ICONICPIX

RIDING IN ON SATAN'S HOBBY HORSE...

"I started off playing guitar in a band called Brainstorm. Later on, I joined Black Rose as a singer, even though I had never sung before my life. They started as a four-piece playing Deep Purple and Rainbow songs without keyboards. I had a Gibson guitar and Marshall stack, but the guitarist was a total Ritchie Blackmore fan and he wanted to be the only guitarist. At first, I had no idea how to use my voice so I just screamed and went home hoarse. I guess I was the best screamer they heard, because I got in. Eventually that band broke up and me and the guitarist met another band who had just lost their guitarist/vocalist. They were into Deep Purple, Rainbow, Kansas... bands with keyboards and complex music. That ended up being the real Black Rose, the one that released 'A Night Of Rehearsal' [2001]. That was recorded on a four-track onto a cassette. That was the way it all started, though Black Rose came to an end on a less-than-serious note. One day we came to rehearsal and there was no keyboard. The keyboardist sold his keyboard so he and his girlfriend could buy a new kitchen. But we were playing shows in the Copenhagen area and had gained quite a reputation. It was a serious hobby, you could say."

MAJOR LABELS: GOOD FOR SOMETHING...

"The band Hank Shermann and Michael Denner were in, Brats, were looking for a lead singer after their first album. They asked me if I wanted to join and I said I would under one condition: that we only played heavy metal, as they had some punk stuff and other styles in there as well. We started together and when CBS heard the demos for the next album, they shit themselves because it wasn't what they were expecting or wanted. Some of the guys wanted to abide by CBS' wishes, some of us were like, 'Why do this if we can't please ourselves first?' So, we went out and found some other guys and that developed into Mercyful Fate."

MISPLACED SATANISM...

"Actually, King Diamond is much more Satanic than Mercyful Fate ever was because the stories and life philosophy on King Diamond albums are from LaVey's 'Satanic Bible'. Mercyful is more about legends like the headless riders, stories of Egypt, questioning religious beliefs, but then there's an album like [King Diamond's] 'House Of God', which goes deeper into how no-one has proof of the existence of any God. If there was proof of one God, we'd all believe in that one God. That's why we have so many different religions and people shouldn't judge others for not believing the same thing they believe. The new King Diamond stage set-up looks more like you'd think Mercyful would've looked like if we had money at the time. There's a gigantic stage set up with a baphomet symbol, hanging upside-down crosses, a huge backdrop and a two-metre tall walkway with stairways. It looks like the inside of a Satanic church."

MONIKER AND MAKE-UP ORIGINS...

"The name, to be honest, I don't know. It was so long ago and a thing we decided to do in Brainstorm. We thought we were going to be big stars and the thinking was that if we had to go play in England or something, they wouldn't be able to pronounce our names. We should make up 'artist' names. Mine became 'King Diamond,' another guy was 'Jesse James,' 'Mike West' was another I remember. Why King Diamond? I don't remember. The make-up was inspired by seeing Alice Cooper in Copenhagen in 1975 on the 'Welcome To My Nightmare' tour. I was standing up front and he seemed so unnatural, but at the same time projected something heavy, something extra, into the audience. You could see the expressions and grimaces on his face better from the audience than if he had no make-up on. I was like, 'Man, if I ever get into a band, I'm going to use make-up too'. It's not like I wanted to look like him, however."

"...CAN'T TELL IF THIS IS TRUE OR DREAM..."

"A lot of things have changed since my heart attacks and surgery, but just as many things haven't. My overall philosophy hasn't changed. On the contrary, it's probably been enhanced because I faced death the way that I did. Mine was a five-and-a-half hour operation that lasted seven-and-a-half hours and just knowing how dangerous bypass surgery is, what can go wrong, you sign off on all the papers and liabilities... when you're lying there and they're rolling you in, it does something to your mind. It's not like you've been knocked out unexpectedly, in a car accident or something where you don't know if you might be dying. You have to prepare for the possibility of death. The waking up process was pure horror. I was told it was going to be difficult to breathe. I was told later on by my wife that I woke up – or came to – a lot earlier after the operation than I should have. There were doctors leaning over me, poking at me and I had that tube down my throat because they had to puncture and collapse my lungs as part of the operation. I remember pain, not being able to breathe and thinking that if there's a Hell, this is it. I don't totally and clearly remember this experience, but my wife told me that I tried to pull the tube out and that they had to call people to tie me down. So, if you can imagine: you're trying to communicate, trying to desperately tell them to take this thing out, but instead you can't communicate, are trying to help yourself by pulling it out – of course, things would have been a lot worse had I got it out – and you're aware they're tying your arms and legs down. I felt like I was in Metallica's 'One'. Had the doctors been able to have heard my thoughts, they would have heard me saying, 'Please kill me'."

CHANGE OF HEART...

"Absolutely my singing has changed! I had to basically learn how to breathe again and I breathe differently now. Two days after the operation I was up and walking around the intensive care unit with the help of a nurse. I couldn't lie down, so I was sleeping an hour at a time sitting in a chair and being woken up by horrible nightmares. I got to experience some of the King Diamond storylines – walking an institution's halls at night, cheating death – and I was home ten days later, which is pretty damn early. I was put on a walking plan and was told that briskly walking a mile-and-a-half or so is optimum for the heart, even when your heart is strong. The intensity that athletes put their hearts through is actually bad for them; it supposedly wears the heart muscle down.

"There have been diet changes too. We eat so healthy now and my wife has become a strict nutritionist. I stopped smoking too. Haven't had a drag since and don't even have the craving. So, with all these changes, my voice has changed as well; it's never been better. I recently recorded some vocals for a new Volbeat track and it's cleaner, clearer and easier to sing all the difficult high parts and everything. Most singers, at this point of their career, their voices start fading, bands start de-tuning to compensate, but I feel stronger. When we played those festivals a few months ago, at the end of the set, it was like, 'Oh, we're done?' In the past, it would have been like, [imitates heavy wheezing] 'Okay just give me a minute'."

THE FUTURE...

"I've stopped taking for granted that I'm going to be here tomorrow as far as everyday life is concerned. There's just so much to do. The way I see things is the difference between living in a house with 20 windows versus living in a house with 40 windows. I see and pay attention to so much more. Stuff like nature and even driving a car, I enjoy every single moment of it. It's not like, 'Ah, let's do it tomorrow'. Now, it's, 'No, let's do it now'. But as far as overall horror and stuff in the lyrics, there's probably going to be even more on the next album, because some of the stuff I experienced in the hospital gives so much food for thought, like the 'Authorised Personnel Only' halls in the cellars where you get taken for certain scans and tests. I can fit these things into stories and there will be so much more that will be real." ☠

www.KingDiamondCoven.com

SATANIC PANIC

BRITISH HEAVY METAL HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH SATAN SINCE ITS INCEPTION. FROM THE PRE-NWOBHM OCCULT DABBLINGS OF LED ZEPPELIN AND THE DEVILISH RUMBLINGS OF BLACK SABBATH THROUGH TO THE FULL-BLOWN SATANIC PANIC IN THE 1980S, IT'S A GENRE THAT'S FREQUENTLY BEEN LINKED WITH LUCIFER. THE LIKES OF SATAN, VENOM AND WITCHFYNDE MAY WELL HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR MORE SATANIC SUB-GENRES BUT HOW MANY NWOBHM BANDS *REALLY* SOLD THEIR SOULS FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL? WORDS: JOHN CONSTERDINE

"Woe to You, oh earth and sea. For the Devil sends the beast with wrath, because he knows the time is short. Let him who hath understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number. Its number is six hundred and sixty six."

Those immortal words at the start of Iron Maiden's 'The Number Of The Beast', words that every metalhead worth their salt knows off by heart, are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to British heavy metal's synonymous link with Satan. Whether it's Barry Clayton's infamous spoken intro, the devilish artwork showing Maiden mascot Eddie pulling Satan's strings or indeed their 1980's peers, who frequently received the blunt end of the local bishop's crosier; there's always been a fascination with the devil within British heavy metal, a fascination that dumbfounded the outside world, a fascination that saw records being condemned as 'the Devil's music' and a fascination that was, well, all a bit of fun really...

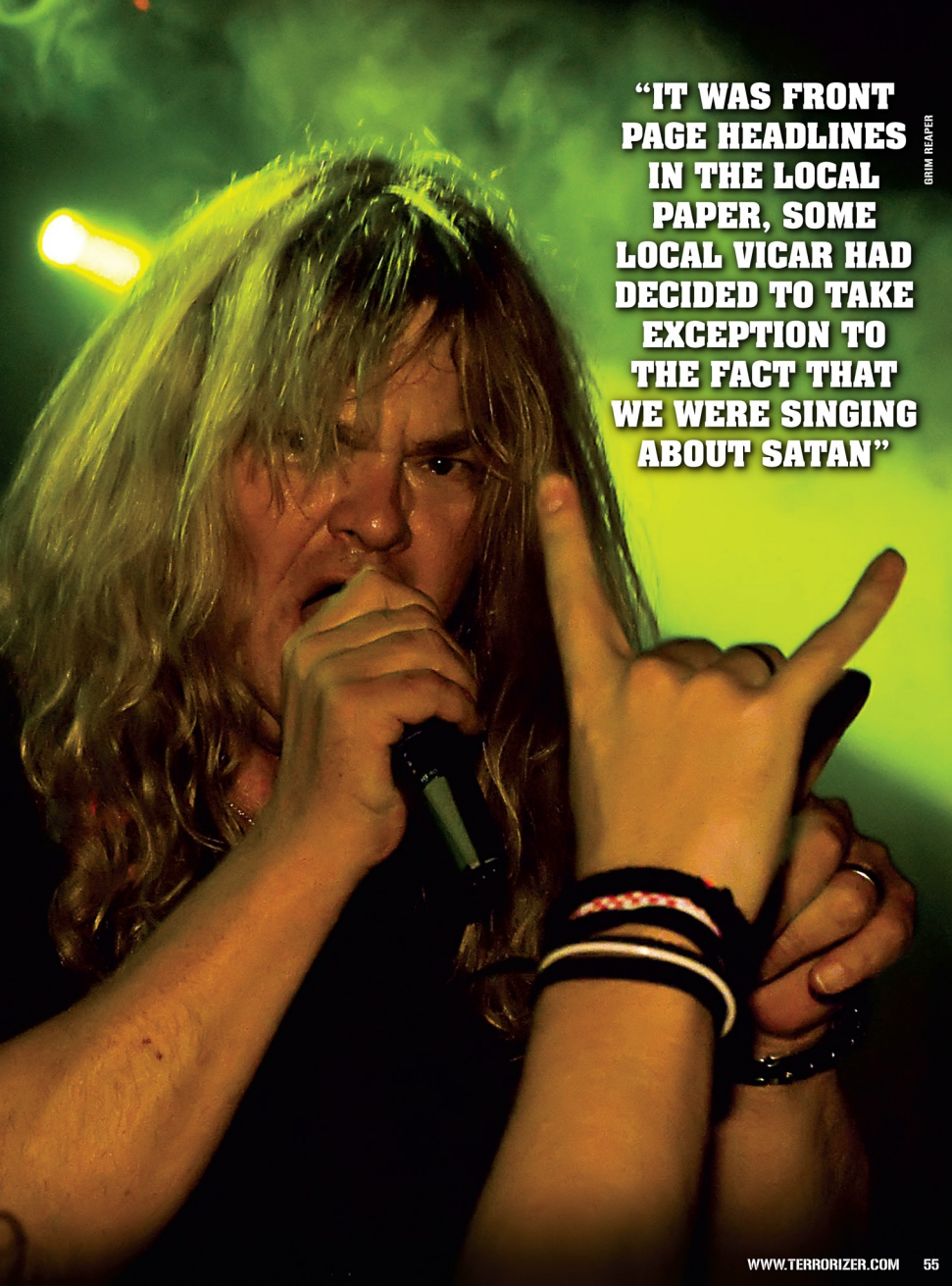
"We were branded back in the day as some kind of Satanic messengers, it's kind of a joke really because we never were and we still aren't, quite the opposite in fact." remembers Satan vocalist Brian Ross. "You had bands like Venom who were writing songs about Satan, the Devil and Beelzebub, whatever name you wanna call him, and they wrote many many songs about that but they're not devil worshippers either."

It's fair to say that in heavy metal, a band's name can say a lot about their music, their image, even to a certain extent their ideologies and beliefs, so it's easy to see why the likes of Satan, Hell and Witchfynde ruffled a few feathers back in the day, but as Brian explains, things aren't always what they seem. "When it comes to names for a metal band, you cannot get better than Satan, but having said that, we don't do any songs about black magic whatsoever, there's nothing in there about Satan. He does get a slight mention in 'Alone In The Dock' on [1983's] 'Court In The Act', but that's a mention because that song is about what happens to a soul after you die, providing you believe all of that, of course."

Whilst they may not exactly fall under the NWOBHM banner, Hell are an unmistakable British heavy metal band, and in particular, one with a soft spot for dark subject matter. But their name certainly didn't come about from being pals with the horned one. "Tony [Speakman, bass] for years and years previously had always banged on about this idea he'd had of a band called Hell," recalls guitarist Kev Bower.

"His original idea was to have a stage set which was all fire and big boulders, it was all a bit cheesy really but we had the initial meeting and we decided that the name was okay because it was short, sharp and to the point, ▸

IRON MAIDEN



"IT WAS FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN THE LOCAL PAPER, SOME LOCAL VICAR HAD DECIDED TO TAKE EXCEPTION TO THE FACT THAT WE WERE SINGING ABOUT SATAN"

"I DID AN INTERVIEW WITH A GUY AND HE SAID, 'YOU MUST BE, YOU DEFINITELY MUST BE DEVIL WORSHIPPERS'"

HELL Pic: Steve Gerrard

it would give listeners an instantaneous idea of what the band was all about and what it represented, but I think most importantly what it did is that it provided a nice platform for a really theatrical stage show."

Whilst their theatrics may have set Hell apart from the other bands on the circuit in the early 1980s, their fiery antics certainly didn't go unnoticed.

"It was front page headlines in the local paper, some local vicar had heard about what we do and had just decided to take exception to the fact that we were singing about Satan and the darker side of human nature," Kev clarifies. "As always he'd taken exception to this without ever seeing us and without reading any of our lyrics and with no real understanding of the message we were trying to communicate, but because he's a vicar and it makes good press it made front page headlines. I think the headline was 'Mums blast the shocker bands', it was some mother whose son had come home from one of our gigs and he was talking about this band that was singing about the devil; so his mother who's a devout Christian, had gone straight round to the church and discussed all this with the local vicar who'd gone straight to the papers with it."

This case of misunderstood identity is something that runs deep through the genre, Satan and Hell certainly aren't the only bands to be given a raw deal for having their music misinterpreted. NWOBHM stalwart Steve Grimmett, from Grim Reaper, has also had his fair share of run-ins with sceptics, particular during the Satanic panic of the 1980s.

Says Steve: "We couldn't play in the Deep South because of [the band name]. I did an interview with a magazine called Cornerstone and I spent three hours on the phone with this guy, it was going backwards and forwards 'cos they were a religious rock magazine. In the start I was this devil worshipper and I'm like, 'I'm really not, this has all been taken out of context'.

"I did an interview with a guy at RCA at their building in New York and he said, 'You must be, you definitely must be devil worshippers'. And I said, 'Well how do you come to that conclusion?', and he's like, 'Well what about songs like 'DOA'?' and that pissed me off straight away. I said, 'You haven't even

read the lyrics have you? You haven't read them, and if you have you haven't understood them; that was [about] one of my best friends who died on the motorway!"

He continues: "The name Grim Reaper provides a wonderful backdrop for great artwork and we did have great artwork for the album sleeves. We never ever gave it one thought when we chose the name, or when the name was chosen 'cos it was already going before I joined them, there was no way it ever to do with the Devil whatsoever, it was just a great name which conjured up thoughts for great songs and great artwork and that's as far as it ever got [laughs]. I know there are bands out there that do it but Grim Reaper isn't one of them and it never has been, but it's stood the test of time with the songs, 'cos everywhere we go, anytime we go somewhere new, there are thousands of fans turning up to see the band and hear the music, which is a great testament to what we did."

British heavy metal may not have been at one with the Ouija board, despite what the 1980's Satanic panic would like you to believe, but there's no doubting that the genre's dark imagery and tongue-in-cheek lyrics have paved the way for much darker, more devilish strains of heavy metal that we all know and love today. Whilst it may come as a surprise to learn that Satan weren't pals with their namesake, Grim Reaper weren't in fact the acolytes set to take you down to the fiery pits and Hell were just a bunch of lads from the East Midlands who loved pyrotechnics. We certainly wouldn't have it any other way. ☠

MIXTAPE

IRON MAIDEN
'The Number Of The Beast'

WHY? NWOBHM's definitive brush with the Devil, firmly nailing the triple six to the masthead. All together now: *"Woe to you, oh earth and sea…"*

FIND IT ON: 'The Number Of The Beast' (EMI, 1982)

GRIM REAPER
'See You In Hell'

WHY? Steve Grimmett and co. dish up an offer you can't refuse… and it's not two for one double glazing!

FIND IT ON: 'See You In Hell' (Ebony, 1983)

HELL
'On Earth As It Is In Hell'

WHY? Hell are the reason the devil has all the best tunes. Who knew his house band hailed from the East Midlands?

FIND IT ON: 'Human Remains' (Nuclear Blast, 2011)

SATAN
'Alone In The Dock'

WHY? There's no pearly gates at the end of this tale, only fire, brimstone and twin guitar riffage.

FIND IT ON: 'Court In The Act' (Neat/Roadrunner, 1983)

DEMON
'Night Of The Demon'

WHY? Don't you know? It's the night of the demon! It's also a truly devilish vocal performance from frontman Dave Hill.

FIND IT ON: 'Night Of The Demon' (Carrere, 1981)

WITCHFYNDE
'Leaving Nadir'

WHY? Slow and steady wins the race, as does true cult artwork. This Witchfynde classic has both.

Excelsior!

FIND IT ON: 'Give 'Em Hell' (Rondelet, 1980)

TRAITORS GATE
'Devil Takes The High Road'

WHY? If the Devil takes the high road, chances are you can undercut him on the inside lane. Be warned, the dude gets serious road rage!

FIND IT ON: 'Devil Takes The High Road' (Bullet, 1985)

VENOM
'In League With Satan'

WHY? Black metal, speed metal, thrash metal; Venom did all of that before it was cool; true pioneers of the Devil's music.

FIND IT ON: 'Welcome To Hell' (Neat, 1981)

THE CONJURERS

IT MAY HAVE TAKEN THE BEST PART OF THREE DECADES BEFORE HELL'S DEBUT ALBUM SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY, BUT THE NEFARIOUS HEAVY METAL OUTFIT HAVE CERTAINLY ACQUIRED A DEVILISH TALE OR TWO ALONG THE WAY. GUITARIST KEV BOWER TALKS TO TERRORIZER ABOUT THEIR FIERY ORIGINS, THEATRICS AND UPSETTING THE LOCAL VICAR WORDS: JOHN CONSTERDINE

Getting started...

"I started playing guitar at about 13. My early heroes were Michael Schenker from UFO, I was heavily influenced by Pat Travers and people like Robin Trower, 'Bridge Of Sighs' in 1974 completely blew me away; like many other young men of that period I just wanted to be like them. Once I'd actually acquired enough skill to play with a band, the first couple of years I just spent playing with cover bands in working men's clubs. At the time, the Nottingham Evening Post had a very active music department on the back couple of pages. There's a section in there where you could post adverts looking for band members and I was just scanning through there one Friday night and saw an advert for this hard rock/heavy metal band who were looking for a guitarist, I called them up and that was actually the guys from Paralex. I went over for the audition and they said I'd got the gig within an hour. Paralex was very straightforward, foot on the monitors, heads down, see it in the end kind of stuff, influenced by the likes of Maiden and Priest and Saxon. We gigged all round the country and released one 12" single through Reddington's Rare Records in Birmingham."

A dangerous meeting...

"The other best known band in the area was Race Against Time, Dave Halliday's band. I'd actually poached Tony Speakman, the bass player, to play in Paralex about a year earlier but I'd become very good friends with Dave Halliday and I was a great admirer of Race Against Time. They were a three-piece and the best way to describe those guys is vintage Black Sabbath playing unreleased Rush material. From the moment I saw these guys I was just utterly blown away by them and I resolved that if the opportunity ever arose I'd move heaven and earth to be in a band with Dave. In late 1981, I'd heard that Race Against Time were finally broken up; I left Paralex immediately, took Tony with me and approached Dave with the idea of forming a new band using myself, Tony, Dave and a drummer to be decided."

Let battle commence...

"Tony for years and years previously had always banged on about this idea he'd had of a band called Hell. His original idea was to have a stage set which was all fire and big boulders; it was all a bit cheesy really. We had the initial meeting and decided that the name was ok because it was short, sharp and to the point, it would give listeners an instantaneous idea of what the band was all about. But I think most importantly what it did is that it provided a nice platform for a really theatrical stage show. As the writing process began to come together, we realised the music wasn't instantly accessible to people and it required two or three listens before people really got their heads round it. We resolved to the fact that a really exciting visual stage show was a good way to ensure that people would at least stay and listen to it and watch the whole show rather than disappearing to the bar after the first couple of numbers. It's a philosophy which worked very well for us back then and in fact it works just as well today."

On Earth as it is in Hell...

"Even though people might not like the music, there was so much activity going on [in our live shows], people would stay and watch the pyros and the general theatrics. As we started to write material, a lot of it focused on the darker side of human nature. Hell's lyrics and songwriting had a great element of storytelling to it, which it still does now and using something that's a little bit dark or macabre or based on historical atrocities or horrendous incidents like the bubonic plague, it really does make a fantastic starting point for writing a song, so the theatrics were all part and parcel from day one. The stage costumes and the choreography, all that happened on the first gig we ever did. The eccentricity, a lot of it was down to the eccentricities of the principal songwriters in the band, which at the time were Dave and myself. In terms of the rest of the theatrics and choreography, a lot of it was about telling stories and even though a lot of the delivery was very tongue-in-cheek, we always took the view that if you've got a serious message to put across to somebody in the lyrics and music of a song, you can either really ram it down somebody's throat (in which case half of the people will just switch off when they've received this bombast) or you can be a little bit more clever about it and dress it up as something else. We always found that it was very successful getting a point across, but doing it with our tongue planted firmly in our cheeks. We used to get asked in interviews, 'Is all this tongue in cheek?' The standard stock reply was, 'Yes it is tongue in cheek, but it's our tongue and it's in your cheek'!"

More tea vicar...

"It was front page headlines in the local papers; some local vicar had heard about what we do and decided to take exception to the fact that we were singing about Satan. As always, he'd taken exception to this without ever seeing us, without reading any of our lyrics and with no real understanding of the message we were trying to communicate, but because he's a vicar and it makes good press, it made front page headlines. I think the headline was 'Mums Blast The Shocker Bands'; it was some mother whose son had come home from one of our gigs and he was talking about this band that was singing about the devil. So, his mother, who's a devout Christian, had gone straight round to the church and discussed all this with the local vicar who'd gone straight to the papers with it."

Releasing their debut album...

"One of the band members, when we finally got the CDs and especially the vinyl through from Nuclear Blast, it actually reduced him to tears. You're talking about guys who've not done anything in the business for 25 years who all thought that their chance had come and gone. For the album just to be released in the first place was extraordinary as far as we were concerned, for it then to go on and do what it's done... you couldn't make it up really, it's beyond a dream."

The future...

"[After] the gig in Derby [in February 2013], there are two things to take away from that. The first of which is that it was completely homegrown, we didn't have some huge production company working for us, the stage set I built in my garage at home; all the choreography, the theatrics, the show is all totally homegrown. The other important thing is the fact that there were fans who'd travelled from 13 different countries to be at that show, there were people there from Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Sweden, a guy from Estonia, a couple of lads travelled over from Bulgaria, there were half a dozen guys from Finland. It's not like they've just got to buy a gig ticket and walk down the road; that involves days off work, flights, hotels and for people to go to those lengths to come and see us, it really tells me that there's gotta be something special going on here. We look forward to the future with baited breath." ⊛

www.Hell-Metal-Band.com

"WE USED TO GET ASKED, 'IS ALL THIS TONGUE IN CHEEK?' THE STANDARD STOCK REPLY WAS, 'YES, BUT IT'S OUR TONGUE AND IT'S IN YOUR CHEEK!'"

KEV
BOWER

Brian Ross

WITH STINTS IN SATAN, BLITZKRIEG AND EVEN AVENGER, BRIAN ROSS HAS BEEN THERE, DONE IT AND MADE THREE LOTS OF NWOBHM T-SHIRTS. THE HEAVY METAL FRONTMAN TALKS TO TERRORIZER ABOUT HIS INFLUENCES, THE EARLY DAYS AND *THAT* METALLICA COVER... WORDS: JOHN CONSTERDINE

INFLUENCES...

"There's four stages of it: the first one was the Beatles. I saw what they were doing, what they were creating and thought, 'I really wanna do that'. The Beatles made me want to be involved in music. Then T. Rex with Marc Bolan, I loved how he wrote lyrics and I thought I'd like to be able to write like that; he influenced the way I chose subjects to write about. Then Alice Cooper in the showmanship side, because when you go and see an Alice Cooper concert, you see it's not just a gig, it is an experience and I wanted to be theatrical like that. The fourth one was actual vocal ability in the form of Mario Lanza the opera singer, he had the most amazing voice, a very powerful voice, and a great affinity with the lyrics that he was singing; Mario Lanza actually lived what he was singing and that to me is something special."

THE DYNAMO SESSION...

"I was invited to take part in a super session in Holland back in 1982. I was in a band called Avenger at the time and I was over there with the drummer of Avenger, Gary Young, and we were working with a couple of guys from Deep Machine [Andy Wrighton, bass and John Wiggins, guitar], a couple of guys from Mercyful Fate [Timmi Hansen, bass and Michael Denner, guitar] and Steve Ramsey from Satan, we formed a super band. We rehearsed for about a week and a half in Holland, we did songs by Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath, Accept and the culmination was a show in the afternoon and a show in the evening at the Dynamo Club in Eindhoven."

JOINING SATAN...

"While we were away [in Eindhoven], Steve approached me to join Satan and at the time I said, 'I'm in a band at the moment', but he insisted and gave me a copy of a Satan demo, which I listened to and I actually loved it; but I still turned it down. When we got back to Newcastle I went back to rehearsing with Avenger and then Satan's manager phoned me up and said, 'We're having a jam, do you wanna come along?' I went and thoroughly enjoyed it and again they asked me to join the band and again I turned it down! About two weeks later, I got a visit from Mick Moore, who was the bass player in Avenger. He came along and said, 'Right Brian I'm gonna get straight to the point: you're fired. You haven't got round to telling Avenger that you've left because you've joined Satan, we've had Steve Ramsey and the manager on the phone telling us no hard feelings'. I said to Mick, 'I've not left Avenger to join Satan, I have no intention of doing so', but it didn't change the outcome. So I phoned up the manager of Satan and said, 'Is the job still open?' And he said, 'Yes it is'. So I said 'Right, count me in'. And that was how I joined Satan."

ROADRUNNER RECORDS...

"They didn't do anything more for us than Neat records would've done and in fact 'Court In The Act' actually came out on Neat records in the UK. There were nice to us, they were great to us and they desperately wanted us to do another album which never materialised because we went our separate ways. Some of the songs that we'd been working on went on to the Blind Fury album with different lyrics to what I'd written, with the exception of 'Dynamo', they kept the title but changed the lyrics. I moved on to manage a local band called Lone Wolf while I was putting ideas together to do 'A Time Of Changes'. Satan went on to do a few gigs with Lou Taylor on vocals and then changed their name to Blind Fury and did 'Out Of Reach'."

EARLY DAYS OF BLITZKRIEG...

"We'd sent the demo to pretty much every record company in the UK; EMI, Polydor, all came back with, 'Thanks, but no thanks'. Neat records was the first record company to say something positive. We did the single with Neat and while we were in the studio we recorded 'Inferno' live which went onto the 'Lead Weight' compilation and it was just a great time. The problems started to happen when Freddie Cannon from Carrere Records at the time had Saxon. He was wandering around England, he went to Leicester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and he went into local record stores and said, 'Have you got anything by any local bands worth listening to?' Revolver Records in Leicester gave him a copy of the Blitzkrieg single and said, 'Listen to these guys, they're very good'. He also left his telephone number to give to us, so our manager gave them a call and what Carrere Records offered Blitzkrieg was a support tour to Saxon throughout the UK and he wanted us to get into the studio and record a new single to follow up from 'Buried Alive; he also wanted us to start writing songs for an album. So we went into the studio and recorded a song called 'Too Wild To Tame', which actually was a Blitzkrieg song originally, but when me and Mick Moore put Avenger together we re-recorded it as Avenger's first single. So the follow up single to 'Buried Alive' was recorded but it was never released. Jim Sirotto the guitar player was head of the science department at Beaumont Leys school in Leicester and it really got to the point where he was having to make a decision, do I leave my job and concentrate completely on Blitzkrieg, or what do I do, and he decided he really didn't wanna pursue a musical career. Freddie Cannon was phoning us everyday saying, 'You haven't signed the contracts, what are you doing?' Everyday we were stalling for time, trying to persuade Jim to change his mind, but he wasn't having any of it. That's when we decided to split up, so we never released an album, we never recorded an album either. A lot of people thought we had actually recorded one but we never did, we had the songs but we never recorded them. Inevitably, that's what I did in 1985, I recorded those songs that we'd written and put them out as 'A Time Of Changes', which is what that album would've been."

CREEPING DEATH...

"I went home one night from recording the album ['A Time Of Changes'], this was in 1985, I got a telephone call from Lars Ulrich and he said, 'Do you mind if we do 'Blitzkrieg'?' I was aware that Metallica were fans of the band and had been for quite some time so when they called and asked if I minded if they did the song, I said, 'No, go for it'. The cover version of 'Blitzkrieg' actually came out a couple of months after 'A Time Of Changes' so it had a knock on effect because a lot of Metallica fans then came and had a listen to Blitzkrieg, which they may not have done otherwise and that was a fantastic thing. The downside of it was that a lot of people thought we were doing a cover version of a Metallica song, but over the years we've managed to put that right and Metallica have done that as well; we've kept in touch with Metallica and they've had copies of every album we've done."

LONGEVITY...

"Satan is probably still very popular because, I personally believe 'Court In The Act' is an absolute classic. I think the fact that we've been away for 30 years and then we've got back together to do another album for all the right reasons, a lot of people, they've thought, 'Yeah this is great and we've waited 30 years to hear this'. Blitzkrieg have been around pretty much solidly without a break since 1985; we've just kept plugging away at it and we're not trying to be anything we're not. It's very much a new line-up but we're staying true to the ideal that was set up all those years ago by myself and Jim Sirotto, whereby it's just pure British metal." ☠

www.SatanMusic.com
www.Blitzed-Alive.com

"People thought we were doing a cover version of a Metallica song"

THE DEVIL HAS ALL THE BEST TUNES

A NEED TO EXPLORE THE DARKER SIDE OF EXISTENCE AND OUR SPIRITUAL NATURE HAS INSPIRED CREATIVITY IN THE ARTS EVER SINCE PEOPLE BEGAN BANGING ON SKIN DRUMS, AND THE LONG INFATUATION BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND HEAVY METAL IS ABOUT AS EXPLICIT AS BAPHOMET'S TITS. BEGINNING WITH A GAGGLE OF GEORDIES AND THEIR NOW INFAMOUS ALBUM 'BLACK METAL' IN 1981, OVERT SATANIC IMAGERY IN METAL HAS BOTH ENTHRALLED AND TERRIFIED ONLOOKERS IN EQUAL MEASURE, NO DOUBT PUTTING A SMILE ON THE FACE OF THE MAN DOWNSTAIRS. HERE ARE THE 75 TOP RECORDS THAT WE AT TERRORIZER EXPECT PROBABLY TAKE PRIDE OF PLACE IN HIS INFERNAL RECORD COLLECTION!

Words: José Carlos Santos

SLAYER pic: ALEX SOLCA

SLAYER
'HELL AWAITS'
(METAL BLADE 1985)

Well, obviously, right? Descending further into Hell than arguably any other album in their discography, 'Hell Awaits' is home for many a Slayer staple, particularly the iconic title track. That creepy reversed "join us" at the beginning still brings a chill to the spine, almost three decades later.

MERCYFUL FATE
'DON'T BREAK THE OATH'
(ROADRUNNER, 1984)

It's a toss between 'Melissa' and this for the best representative of the band responsible for turning many an '80s metaller onto the Left Hand Path, but we figured a big fucking horned devil engulfed in flames on the cover, and 'A Dangerous Meeting' tipped the infernal scales in favour of the second album.

MORBID ANGEL

'ALTARS OF MADNESS'

(EARACHE, 1989)

A universal classic, responsible for dragging death metal down to the darkest and most twisted abyss imaginable. Trey Azagthoth's labyrinthine riffing is like a million microscopic demons wreaking havoc along your bloodstream, it transcends genres and takes on an unholy life of its own.

VON

'SATANIC BLOOD'

(SELF-RELEASED, 1992)

Technically, the album 'Satanic Blood' is from 2012, but we're really talking about the 1992 classic demo, rough as the patchy skin on Satan's buttocks, featuring the classic line-up of Goat, Snake and Kill (those were the days for awesome pseudonyms, right?) that inspired fiends the world over, including Watain, who took their name from one of the songs.

BATHORY

'BATHORY'

(BLACK MARK PRODUCTIONS, 1984)

Without that logo, without that goat's head, without 'In Conspiracy With Satan', without everything else about this legendary album, black metal simply would not exist. A mighty legacy.

THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN

'THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN'

(TRACK/ATLANTIC, 1968)

Endlessly sampled and used as inspiration, the absolute highlight, and #1 hit single from this album, 'Fire', is the most visible proof of how Arthur Brown's work has been a decisive influence on everyone who has ever written a single note with the Devil in mind.

EMPEROR

'IN THE NIGHTSIDE ECLIPSE'

(CANDLELIGHT, 1994)

"Thy path is capricious but yet so wide / With no such thing as an impediment too strong / Every time thou consecrate me to another secret of Thine / I take another step towards Thy Pantheon / Forever wilt I bleed for Thee / Forever wilt I praise Thy dreaded name / Forever wilt I serve Thee / Thou shalt forever prevail." – 'Inno A Satana'. Enough said, really.

VENOM

'WELCOME TO HELL'

(NEAT, 1981)

Alongside Bathory, Venom not only took metal to previously unheard levels of extremity musically, but also lyrically and conceptually, laying down a foundation for endless hordes of devil-worshippers to build on to this day. Sons of Satan, indeed.

MAYHEM

'DE MYSTERIIS DOM SATHANAS'

(DEATHLIKE SILENCE, 1994)

An absolute cornerstone of black metal; the devil's genre by definition. No matter how many times we've heard these songs, so much that it seems they're part of our bloodstream by now, their power remains the same – something was surely afoot during their creation, and it wasn't of this world.

PENTAGRAM

'PENTAGRAM'

(PENTAGRAM, 1985)

Later renamed 'Relentless' upon its reissue by Peaceville, the fact is, regardless of what you call it, Pentagram's first album exhales discomfort and evil, as if the eyes of Baphomet on the cover are burrowing a hole through your skull every time Bobby Liebling sings *"You think that I'm the devil"* at the beginning of '20 Buck Spin'.

SABBAT

'THE DWELLING'

(EVIL RECORDS, 1996)

Both bands called Sabbat make our list, which is surely a sign of approval from down below. In the case of the Japanese Sabbat, it would have probably been more kvlt to pick an album like 'Evoke', which contains the utterly classic 'Metalucifer And Evilucifer', but this hour-long one-song ode to the horned one simply reeks of dedication to the cause more than anything else they've ever done.

WATAIN

'SWORN TO THE DARK'

(SEASON OF MIST, 2007)

It is a well-established fact that each time Watain perform the song 'Storm Of The Antichrist', a little chubby angel dies and falls from heaven. Such is the vicious seriousness that the Swedish band applies to their black arts, particularly on this chaotic landmark album.

GHOST

'OPUS EPONYMOUS'

(RISE ABOVE, 2010)

The main culprits responsible for the current obsession with all things occult in rock/metal, the anonymous Swedish sextet led by Papa Emeritus (now II) have turned into unlikely superstars, a result of their insanely catchy odes to the Antichrist and their irresistible imagery and live set-up.

ABSU

'THE THIRD STORM OF CYTHRAUL'

(OSMOSE PRODUCTIONS, 1997)

The first part of Absu's Celtic mythology cycle (covering just one mythology would be boring for Proscriptor) is Absu at their very best – relentless yet always surprising, a truly unique entity that keeps going to unusual depths in their exploration of ancient, occult myths, poking the nastiest creatures they might find lurking down there.

BLACK WIDOW

'SACRIFICE'

(CBS, 1970)

Another pioneer of occult imagery and concept, Black Widow are mostly known for the rather awesome song, 'Come To The Sabbat', which has been universally covered and referenced, but each track on the record is a dark, mazy piece of occult prog wonderfulness.

IMPALED NAZARENE

'TOL CORMPT NORZ NORZ NORZ'

(OMOSE PRODUCTIONS, 1993)

"Thy Shall All Be Marked 666", is what that title means, and that we were, as soon as Mika Luttinen's first inhuman shriek in 'I Al Purg Vonpo / My Blessing (The Beginning Of The End)' was vomited forth from the speakers for the first time. There's Satan in that throat, man.

BABYLON WHORES

'KING FEAR'

(NECROPOLIS, 1999)

The ever-brilliant Babylon Whores' 1997 debut 'Cold Heaven' was probably the most Luciferian album ever to never actually mention the name of the horned one, so, always defying preconceptions, Babylon Whores started their incredible second album with a song containing the chorus *"say you love Satan"*. In the current musical climate, this band would be huge. Please come back.

COVEN

'WITCHCRAFT DESTROYS MINDS & REAPS SOULS'

(MERCURY, 1969)

One of the first bands to dedicate themselves exclusively to occult themes, and frequently uncredited pioneers for many staples of our beloved Devil's music – the sign of the horns, inverted crosses and the expression "Hail Satan". Oh, and the first song is called 'Black Sabbath'.

IRON MAIDEN
'THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST'
(EMI, 1982)

A classic among classics, proving that playing the devil's music (and it doesn't get any more devilish than a chorus of *"666, the number of the beast"*) doesn't mean you can't headline arenas. Also, if you'll forgive the blasphemy, Eddie > Satan.

SODOM
'IN THE SIGN OF EVIL'
(SPV/STEAMHAMMER RECORDS, 1984)

Ugly, bestial proto-black metal, so atavistic and relentless in its attack that when Tom Angelripper snarls *"Satan sends his warriors / Demons break out of hell"* during 'Outbreak Of Evil' we damn well believe him.

HELLHAMMER
'APOCALYPTIC RAIDS'
(NOISE, 1984)

They say the Devil is in the details, but the immeasurably important four songs on the only Hellhammer release (demos and compilations aside) have no details whatsoever. Most of this hellish noise barely qualifies as music by any regular person's standards, and still His presence is felt like on very few other records.

SEPULTURA
'MORBID VISIONS'
(COGUMELO, 1986)

No politics, no native Indians, no world music, no berimbaus. Just bad English, out-of-tune guitars, savage thrash/death and total Venom/Hellhammer worship. Those were the days.

DARKTHRONE
'TRANSILVANIAN HUNGER'
(PEACEVILLE, 1994)

Anything from 'A Blaze In The Northern Sky' to 'Panzerfaust' could be here, and in fact one could look at those four albums, as the the entire blueprint for minimalist, lo-fi black metal; like one continuous, atonal belch from Satan himself.

AKERCOCKE
'THE GOAT OF MENDES'
(PEACEVILLE, 2001)

Arguably Akercocke's finest hour, the one that firmly established the erotic, devilish elegance with which they deployed their insanely furious blackened death metal. No band will ever wear suits and sing about menstrual blood and semen like this again.

ONSLAUGHT
'POWER FROM HELL'
(CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION, 1985)

Satanic thrash was a big thing in the '80s and it's a shame that the recent thrash revival focused more on the crossover/party bands than on bands such as Onslaught, whose Venom-ish debut can still raise the dead to throw the horns, and headbang along to face-rippers like 'Lord Of Evil'.

LED ZEPPELIN
'LED ZEPPELIN III'
(ATLANTIC, 1970)

Jimmy Page's well-documented interest in the occult (which, incidentally, has sparked several hilarious "articles" in crazy/religious publications) started seeping more noticeably into Led Zep on this album, which included the well known powerful phrases "Do What Thou Wilt" and "So Mote Be It" inscribed on each side of the record.

IN SOLITUDE
'THE WORLD. THE FLESH. THE DEVIL'
(METAL BLADE 2011)

A remarkable mix of the old-school cult feeling of Mercyful Fate with the best of vintage Maiden, done by a bunch of young lads from Sweden bursting confidently through the doors that Ghost kicked wide open.

SABBAT

'HISTORY OF A TIME TO COME'

(NOISE, 1988)

"Bell, book and candle, candle, book, bell/ forwards and backwards to damn me to Hell," snarls Martin Walkyier on 'A Cautionary Tale', the Faustian opener on this amazing occult-drenched thrash classic, as if the Devil himself had sent him. He probably did.

MORTUARY DRAPE

'ALL THE WITCHES DANCE'

(UNISOUND, 1995)

An album of thick atmosphere, so thick that you wouldn't really be surprised if sulphur started coming out of your speakers during a listen. It's as if old Black Sabbath riffs have been left to rot on the plains of Hades, and then resurrected as infernal black/death versions of their former selves.

WITCHFYNDE

'GIVE 'EM HELL'

(RONDELET, 1980)

Sure, that goat dude on the cover might seem a bit corny these days, but Witchfynde were a wonderful anomaly of the NWOBHM, seeped in occult imagery and Satanic lyrics but providing blistering, to-the-point British heavy metal on top of it. Kind of like the missing link between Venom and Iron Maiden.

SATAN'S WRATH

'GALLOPING BLASPHEMY'

(METAL BLADE, 2012)

Goat heads, bulletbelts and axes – yeah, Greek duo Satan's Wrath remember what was cool about the '80s Satanic thrash, and they're doing it right.

NECROMANTIA

'CROSSING THE FIERY PATH'

(OSMOSE, 1993)

Spawned from the same scene as the mighty 'Non Serviam', Necromantia's debut exhibits similar characteristics – a rather exotic take on black metal, with a distinct Mediterranean feel, but unwavering in its adoration of the one down below.

BLASPHEMY

'FALLEN ANGEL OF DOOM....'

(WILD RAGS, 1990)

One of the finest examples of CANADIAN METAL! (admit it, after that Darkthrone song you won't ever be able to pronounce that normally) ever, a rotten slab of blackened war metal that vomits forth tales of desecration, rituals and fucking vengeance from hell. Bestial and unholy. Essential!

WITCHCRAFT

'WITCHCRAFT'

(RISE ABOVE, 2004)

Equal parts doom and psychedelic rock, it was a magnificent debut by a band originally formed just to pay tribute to Pentagram. Kick-started a whole movement that still sees Sweden as the global capital for vintage rock to this day.

BEHERIT

'DRAWING DOWN THE MOON'

(SPINEFARM, 1993)

The name of the band itself says it all – Beherit is Syriac for Satan, and 'Drawing Down The Moon' is one of the most evil-sounding records ever. Equally primitive and subtle, listening to it is a disorienting experience, and it continues to be a strange malefic beast to this day.

THE DEVIL'S BLOOD

'COME, REAP'

(VAN/ PROFOUND LORE, 2008)

Another of the big names responsible for the current occult wave, now tragically split up, The Devil's Blood roared out of the gates with this amazing EP, a mix of everything that was great about '60s and '70s psychedelia and a lot of other bands on this list like Coven, Black Widow and Black Sabbath.

SABBATH ASSEMBLY

'RESTORED TO ONE'

(THE AJNA OFFENSIVE, 2010)

An album in which Dave Nuss and Jex Thoth interpret hymns of The Process Church of The Final Judgement, a religious group that believes in the unity of Christ and Satan. Frighteningly real.

DECEMBER WOLVES

'BLASTERPIECE THEATER'

(EARACHE, 2002)

Featuring Trap Them guitarist Brian Izzi, December Wolves are one of the most underrated bands ever. Few others have managed to drench their music in so much abject violence and endless bile as DW have. Also, check out the video for 'Porn Again Christian', if you're brave enough. And no, you won't find it on YouTube.

INFERNÄL MÄJESTY

'NONE SHALL DEFY'

(ROADRACER, 1987)

An often unsung classic of '80s speed/thrash, 'None Shall Defy' was instrumental, alongside Possessed's equally demonic classic 'Seven Churches', in the transition from thrash to the birth of death metal. And, well, you just can't beat a crowned, green devil on the cover and a song called 'S.O.S.' that means "Satan Our Saviour".

SARCÓFAGO

'I.N.R.I.'

(COGUMELO, 1987)

A cornerstone of blasphemy, not to mention extreme metal as a whole, 'I.N.R.I.'s filthy, blunt and primitive blackthrash assault, typical of South American sonic extremists, shocked many at the time. Even today, a quarter of a century later, devilish anthems such as 'Satanic Lust' or 'Christ's Death' are not for the squeamish.

ELECTRIC WIZARD

'BLACK MASSES'

(RISE ABOVE, 2010)

Probably the only Wizard album that tends more to the Devil side than to the drug side; although it might be arguable that they're both on the same side, having a blast, whilst rocking out to 'Black Mass'. *"Hear me Lucifer / Black Mass, Black Mass / Take me Higher, Higher / Black Mass, Black Mass"*. Fuck yeah.

JESS AND THE ANCIENT ONES

'JESS AND THE ANCIENT ONES'

(SVART, 2012)

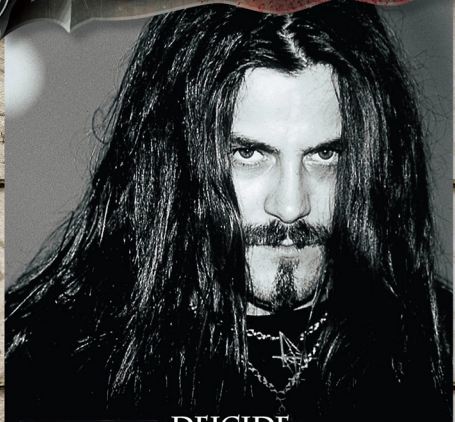
Mystical, ritualistic, and with an incredibly enveloping live show, Jess And The Ancient Ones symbolise most of what's great about the occult craze we're living in right now. Sure, trends always come and go, but it's much better to live this trend than, say, nu metal or some other plastic crap.

ANCIENT VVISDOM

'A GODLIKE INFERNO'

(SHINEBOX, 2011)

Emerging out of seemingly nowhere with a unique musical personality already formed, Ancient VVisdom wield their infernal message via a remarkable acoustic foundation and cleanly sung, super-catchy vocals, which allow you to realise exactly what's being sung. And it's stuff like *"Hail to thee Lord Lucifer / I sing praises to thee / and I suffer no longer"*. Unbelievably powerful.



DEICIDE

'DEICIDE'

(ROADRUNNER, 1990)

Little remains to be said about the blasphemous power of Deicide on their legendary debut – it's Glen "I have a fucking inverted cross burned on my forehead, so I win" Benton at his most violent and best, and one of the most viciously anti-Christian records ever made.

UNCLE ACID AND THE DEADBEATS

'BLOOD LUST'

(RISE ABOVE, 2011)

A fuzzy, hazy tale involving witchery, horrific murder and (of course) Satan himself, and the perfect music to describe this totally '60s horror movie scenario. What's not to like, for Devil's sake?

ROTTING CHRIST

'NON SERVIAM'

(UNISOUND, 1994)

Dave Mustaine was so displeased with just the name of the band that he famously refused to share the stage with Rotting Christ in 2005 – imagine if he had actually heard 'Non Serviam', a furious masterpiece of dark atmosphere, majestic rawness and anti-Christianity.

GORGOROTH

'UNDER THE SIGN OF HELL'

(MALICIOUS RECORDS, 1997)

The last album before Gaahl joined the band is a chilling, chaotic blast of pure demonic fury – all 33 minutes of it sound like they were spat out by Lucifer himself during a hellish snowstorm.

BLOOD CEREMONY

'LIVING WITH THE ANCIENTS'

(RISE ABOVE, 2011)

You might be lullabied into submission by Alia O'Brien's evil siren-like vocals and flute, but when you realise she's singing stuff like *"I summon thee my demon, Lord of the Flies"*, it's already too late, your soul is doomed.

PURSON

'THE CIRCLE AND THE BLUE DOOR'

(RISE ABOVE, 2013)

Straight off Wikipedia for ya: "In demonology, Purson is a Great King of Hell," but they'll have to change that – Hell now has a queen, and her name is Rosalie Cunningham, mysterious vocalist for these stars of the occult on the rise. Mystical, trippy and irresistible.

ACHERON

'RITES OF THE BLACK MASS'

(TURBO MUSIC, 1992)

Guitarist Vincent Crowley not only talked it, he walked it too – known as Reverend back then, for that was his function in the Church of Satan, and Acheron's black/death output on their first album is everything you'd expect form a man of the (Satanic) cloth.

POSSESSED

'SEVEN CHURCHES'

(COMBAT, 1985)

Considered by many the first death metal album, 'Seven Churches' has a reserved seat in the great pantheon of extreme metal records, and even today it'll still teach many kids to play it like it should be played – twisted, brutal, fast and with blunt Satanic lyrics.

ROKY ERICKSON & THE ALIENS

'THE EVIL ONE'

(SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY, 1981)

Roky's 80's albums get under your skin more sharply than any screaming black metal band ever will because (well, besides the utterly genius songwriting) everything he sings about was *real* to him, given his mental condition. When he sings *"don't shake me Lucifer / With the devil's hell fire"*, he's really addressing him. He's been there, and you haven't.

INTEGRITY

'SEASONS IN THE SIZE OF DAYS'

(VICTORY, 1997)

Not many hardcore albums made it onto this list, but Integrity are very far from a typical hardcore band. Through ten shorts bursts of insane anger (and one massive half-hour headfuck at the end) Dwid Hellion unleashes his, yours and everyone else's demons in a totally unhinged fashion. His gruesome stream-of-consciousness lyrics are just the final piece of a terrifying whole.

NIFELHEIM

'ENVOY OF LUCIFER'

(REGAIN, 2007)

Nifelheim's earlier works might be more kvlt, but this is by far their best album yet, a perfect balance of their signature wacky blackthrash and assorted true metal parts, an approach similar to current Darkthrone. Furthermore, it features drummer Peter Stjärnvind, whose nickname in Nifelheim is just about the best pseudonym ever: "The Insulter of Jesus Christ!".

ENTOMBED

'LEFT HAND PATH'

(EARACHE, 1990)

More playful with Satanic imagery throughout their career than most of the bands on this list, Entombed nevertheless fully deserve their place on it based on the title of their first album alone. In fact, 'Left Hand Path' is so awesome and was so deeply revolutionary for metal that it would deserve a place on any list.

INQUISITION

'MAGNIFICENT GLORIFICATION OF LUCIFER'

(NO COLOURS, 2004)

Let's face it, we could have filled this whole list with black metal, but that would be too easy. So the only black metal bands are the ones that really show something special and uniquely different. Few go deeper than Inquisition, the American (via Colombia) duo responsible for frighteningly intense odes such as 'Eternal Loyalty To Our Lord Satan'.

ARCHGOAT

'WHORE OF BETHLEHEM'

(HAMMER OF HATE, 2006)

We could fill an entire list as big as this one with nothing but "goat" bands, but Archgoat are an illustrious representative of that very particular group. The cold, emotionless wrath they display on this entire album is enough to make angels shrivel up and die. And if Satan ever did a mixtape, closer 'Hammer Of Satan' would definitely be on it.

CLOVEN HOOF

'CLOVEN HOOF'

(NEAT, 1984)

Look at that cover; Satan surrounded by flames, while controlling the minds of innocent-looking musicians. It's like these Wolverhampton kids didn't want to be held responsible for remarkable occult heavy metal anthems like 'Gates Of Gehenna' or 'Return Of The Passover'.

BEHEXEN

'RITUALE SATANUM'

(SINISTER FIGURE, 2000)

"Rituale Romanum" is a Catholic text, so you see what they did there. That's one of the softest mockeries of Christian faith on this violent black metal opus, though, as blasphemous cuts like 'Christ Forever Die' contain lovely lines such as *"we cut open his chest with the black steel and let that red urine run out from the stinking corpse"*.

BEHEMOTH
'EVANGELION'
(NUCLEAR BLAST, 2009)

Though Behemoth started out as a black metal band, it's their latest, well into their death metal years, that sees them at the top of their flirtation with the devil, unleashing a very different version of the Catholic Evangelion and closing the record with a towering epic simply called 'Lucifer'.

NECROS CHRISTOS
'DOOM OF THE OCCULT'
(SEPULCHRAL VOICE, 2011)

Cavernous, mystical death metal delivered with such conviction, depth and sprawling ambition, that you'll actually start looking over your shoulder for any approaching demons that might want to drag you down to the "Kingly Tombs" with them. Yikes.

OCCULTATION
'THREE & SEVEN'
(PROFOUND LORE, 2012)

Another essential project from Negative Plane guitarist Nameless Void, this time diving deep into occult doom and emerging with a fabulous bass-driven, Ghost-like atmospheric masterpiece, that will surely serve as a building block for greater things to come.

DEATHSPELL OMEGA
'SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRES, CIRCUMSPICE'
(NORMA EVANGELIUM DIABOLI, 2004)

Extremely controversial, the record that marked the band's switch towards the complex entity they've since become is a difficult, slithering beast, but one that firmly established the aesthetics and concept of Orthodox Satanism not only in their own work, but in others that would follow them.

GRAVE MIASMA
'EXALTED EMANATION'
(SEPULCHRAL VOICE, 2009)

While we patiently wait for a full-length, we might as well put Grave Miasma's only EP in every list we can think of. It's deserved too, there's a reason why we're anxious for a full album – putrid, infernal atmosphere like that of 'Kussa'u Tibtihu' and other majestically grotesque cuts on the EP doesn't show up often. Come on, guys.

MASTER'S HAMMER
'RITUAL'
(MONITOR, 1991)

These Czechs would get increasingly weird as time went by, but Master's Hammer's debut is very much black metal through and through, with real personality and no need to copy any of their contemporaries. And the weird gene was very much present already in Franta's insane screaming – if the album's indeed about a ritual, it's surely being performed on him.

SATURNALIA TEMPLE
'AION OF DRAKON'
(THE ANJA OFFENSIVE, 2011)

Profoundly ritualistic, Saturnalia Temple's debut was a dark, foreboding revelation, taking strands of Black Sabbath, Pentagram, Celtic Frost, drone, doom and delirious psychedelia, and building a creepy sonic temple where only the bravest of souls doth enter.

THE SECRET
'AGNUS DEI'
(SOUTHERN LORD, 2012)

The Devil isn't exclusive to black metal and occult doom – unhinged grind/dark hardcore like the stuff The Secret unleash can be a vehicle just as appropriate, if not even more so. 'Agnus Dei' sounds like the goat on the cover of the previous 'Solve Et Coagula' coming to life and trampling you to death.

ANGELCORPSE

'HAMMER OF GODS'

(OSMOSE, 1996)

Some of the most brutal blackened death metal ever committed to tape, 'Hammer Of Gods' was a worthy successor of Pete Helmkamp's previous band, the legendary Order From Chaos. Check out 'Envenomed' or 'Black Solstice' for some foul pleasure.

BLACK SABBATH

'SABBATH BLOODY SABBATH'

(WARNER BROS, 1973)

What would any list be without Black Sabbath? The cover art for their fifth album alone, by famous artist Drew Struzan, depicting an evil man at the moment of his death, surrounded by demons and what one presumes is Satan himself, is one of heavy metal's best album cover and it's reason enough for inclusion.

DANZIG

'DANZIG'

(DEF AMERICAN, 1988)

Good ol' Glenn has always dabbled in devilry, and his first solo album has some of his more emblematic songs, including the super-hit 'Mother'. Remember how the video for that one ends?

DISSECTION

'STORM OF THE LIGHT'S BANE'

(NUCLEAR BLAST, 1995)

The themes on this album are made all the more real by Jon Nödtveidt's own path. His true devotion to Satanism ultimately led to a seemingly ritualistic suicide in 2006, but the icy chill of 'Unhallowed' or 'Where Dead Angels Lie' is eternal and immortal.

YEAR OF THE GOAT

'ANGELS' NECROPOLIS'

(VAN RECORDS, 2012)

With a debut as strong as this, Year Of The Goat are set to become huge in the future, filling a bit of the space left by The Devil's Blood. It's all here – a sort of concept album on the rise of Lucifer and fall of Jesus, the whole goats/candles/skulls/pentagrams visuals and, most of all, bloody great, infectious mystical rock tunes.

IMMOLATION

'CLOSE TO A WORLD BELOW'

(METAL BLADE, 2000)

One of the most consistently blasphemous death metal bands hit an absolute peak in Jesus-hating with this record, a true showcase of deliriously twisted riffing, with Bob Vigna in super-crazy form, wrenching millions of notes from his guitar as if each one of them was a new gaping flesh wound inflicted on the impaled body of Christ.

MENACE RUINE

'THE DIE IS CAST'

(ALIEN8, 2008)

When your wretched life is done, and you're sailing down the Styx, if anything can be heard above the wailing and gnashing of teeth, it'll surely be this record – a harsh, medieval, noise-ridden piece of brilliance, its black heart cut through by Geneviève's emotionless chanting. Chilling to the bone.

LEVIATHAN

'MASSIVE CONSPIRACY AGAINST ALL LIFE'

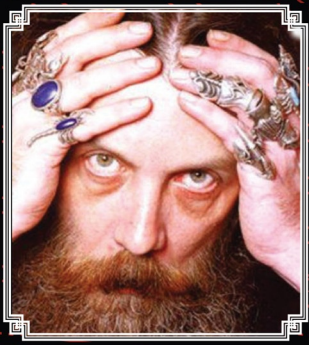
(MORIBUND CULT, 2008)

One of the great black metal records of the past decade, Leviathan's masterpiece sounds exactly like that depiction of Satan on the cover ripping your face apart slowly and methodically. The odd, grotesquely poetic lyrics of sole member Wrest only add to the unpleasant otherworldliness of the whole thing.

DEVIL'S ESSENTIALS

We count down heavy metal's affiliations with the horned one...

Words: Ronnie Kerswell O'Hara



A IS FOR...

ALAN MOORE, an English writer of graphic novels, most notably 'V For Vendetta' and 'From Hell'. He's also a follower of the writings of Aleister Crowley. A is also for Akercocke, those be-suited blackened metal London Satanists.

B IS FOR...

BLOOD, the life force, used in ritualistic practices. Real or fake, it's also a preferred showering method for certain bands. B is also for Baphomet, a deity ascribed to Pagans and Satanists, most recognisable from 19th century ceremonial magician Eliphas Levi's Sabbatic Goat image, adopted by the Church of Satan.

C IS FOR...

CHURCH BURNINGS allegedly carried out by members of black metal bands and their fans in Norway between 1992 and 1996. Emperor's Samoth, Jørn Inge Tunsberg of Hades and Burzum's Varg Vikernes were all convicted of torching chapels. Vikernes infamously used the image of the charred Fantoft Stave Church for the cover of 'Aske' (which aptly translates as 'Ash').

D IS FOR...

THE DEVIL – ruler of Hell, embodiment of evil, foe of God and source of inspiration for many. 'Nuff said.

E IS FOR...

ESOTERIC traditions as practiced by various groups involved in the occult and ceremonial magic. The philosophies centre on the 'left-hand path' (sometimes referred to as malicious black magic) and the 'right-hand path' (synonymous with good or white magic). E is also for Electric Wizard, whose heavy tones are informed by occult interests.

F IS FOR...

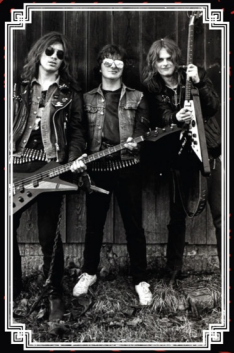
FIRE. Arthur Brown certainly thought he was the god of hellfire, and hellfire is the flaming subject of tracks by Black Label Society, Sodom, Anthrax and more. F is also for Fratello Metallo – actual Franciscan monk-fronted metal – a right oxymoron if ever there was one!

G IS FOR...

GOATS. The Goat Of Mendes adorns cover imagery, and goats take over monikers such as Goatsnake, Goatwhore and Goat, who hail from a dark village in Sweden where the occupants are said to have practiced voodoo for centuries.

H IS FOR...

HORNS, and also for Switzerland's Hellhammer, whose brutal delivery and Satanic lyrics would help shape the black metal scene. Guitarist/vocalist Tom G Warrior and bassist Martin Eric Ain went on to form Celtic Frost.



J IS FOR...

Those 'JESUS Is A C**t' T-shirts, aka Cradle Of Filth's Vestal Masturbation shirts, banned in New Zealand, and the source of court appearances and fines for some fans. That didn't stop band members wearing 'I Love Satan' shirts to the Vatican. Naughty boys!

K IS FOR...

KING DIAMOND – that Danish, high-octave, quasi-Satanic crooner, follower of LaVeyan Satanism and frontman with King Diamond and Mercyful Fate.

I IS FOR...

INVERTED CRUCIFIX, a symbol of the antichrist and devil worship, as used by Dimmu Borgir, Death, Danzig, Black Sabbath and anyone else who wants to piss off their nan and the church.

L IS FOR...

LAVEY, Anton LaVey, that bald-headed, devil-bearded founder of the Church of Satan. This occultist, mystic and founder of LaVeyan Satanism penned The Satanic Bible. Surprising readers include Finch guitarist Alex Linares. Mayhem guitarist Euronymous once dubbed LaVey a 'peace loving hippy'.

THE DEVIL'S CULTURE

M IS FOR...

MURDER and also for Mayhem – the two have gone hand in hand since a dark cloud descended on Norway's black metal scene after the suicide of singer Per 'Dead' Ohlin in the spring of 1991, setting in motion a complicated downward spiral of events, leading to the fatal stabbing of Euronymous, for which Varg 'Count Grishnackh' Vikernes has served time.

N IS FOR...

NERGAL, frontman of Behemoth, who appeared in a Polish court for ripping up the bible, denouncing religion and generally annoying the church.

P IS FOR...

PENTAGRAM, the downward-facing pentangle, and Pagan, not strictly a devil-worshipping religion (although certain church-goers will try and persuade you otherwise) but one that respects nature.

O IS FOR...

OCCULT, which refers to that of the supernatural, secret and hidden knowledge, and higher consciousness. Also occult practices, which include alchemy, neo-paganism, divination and spiritualism. It's also for Ouija boards, the use of which inspired many albums, including The Mars Volta's 'The Bedlam In Goliath'.

Q IS FOR...

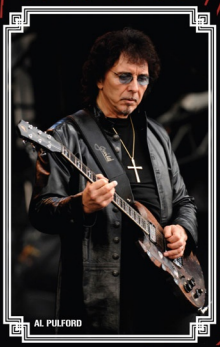
QUORTHON, singer and main songwriter of Bathory, whose early albums included 'Under The Sign Of The Black Mark', which contained the devil-referencing epic 'Enter The Eternal Fire'.

R IS FOR...

RARE and cult horror films that have inspired bands over the decades, such as 'The Exorcist', 'The Devil Rides Out', Ken Russell's 'The Devils', Michael Reeves' 'Witchfinder General', Edgar Ulmer's 'The Black Cat', Sergio Martino's (hilarious!) 'All The Colours Of The Dark' and FW Murnau's 1926-released 'Faust'...

S IS FOR...

SIX, SIX, SIX – Hell, it can't be the Devil's music without these! S is also for subliminal messages; Judas Priest, Led Zeppelin, Marilyn Manson and Slayer have all been accused of Satanic backmasking. Cradle Of Filth's 'Dinner At Deviant's Palace' demonstrates backmasking to its best effect, where (as practiced in black masses) the Lord's Prayer has been recorded backwards.



AL PULFORD

T IS FOR...

TRITONE – or the 'Devil's Interval', that 'forbidden note' favoured by Tony Iommi, best heard on Black Sabbath's signature self-titled track. The tritone was banned by the church in Medieval times for fear that it would summon the Devil and invoke sexual desires.

ZEN INOYA

V IS FOR...

VENOM. You wouldn't want to mess with this lot on a dark night; their 1981-released debut 'Welcome To Hell' is the real deal, while the follow-up 'Black Metal' was a cornerstone in metal's infatuation with the Devil.

U IS FOR...

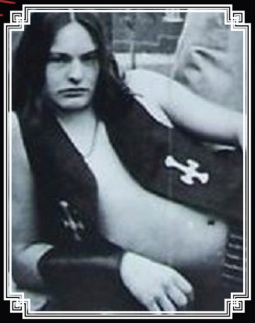
UNDERWORLD – where else would these demons creep out from? U is also for Unrepentant – if you sin, you win, right?

W IS FOR...

WAGNER, one scary German mo-fo whose 19th century compositions were littered with tritones, particularly on 'Götterdämmerung' in which a movement represents the Pagan black mass. W is also for Watain, whose powerful imagery, secret rituals and harsh sonics are what the phrase 'dark arts' was invented for.

Y IS FOR...

'YOU AND ME AND THE DEVIL MAKES 3' by Marilyn Manson, aka the God Of Fuck, whose 1996-released 'Antichrist Superstar' opus references Aleister Crowley with the phrase, *"When you are suffering, know that I have betrayed you"* in its hidden track.



X IS FOR...

XASTHUR, the celebrated American black metal project of Scott Conner, who released through Hydra Head and Southern Lord. While lyrical content might not refer to Satan, corpsepaint-clad Conner took the moniker from a combination of a demon and a deity.

Z IS FOR...

ZEEB PARKES, vocalist with cult heavy metal outfit Witchfinder General, whose 1982 and 1983-released efforts 'Death Penalty' and 'Friends Of Hell' are considered seminal doom outings.

ONCE UPON THE CROSS

THE TERRORIZER UNIVERSE IS LARGELY A DARK AND NEGATIVE PLACE FILLED WITH SUICIDE AND STRIFE, DEMONS AND DEBAUCHERY, BUT FOR SUCH LONG SHADOWS YOU FIRST NEED LIGHT. HERE'S THE TESTAMENT OF SOME OF THE CHRISTIAN METAL SCENE'S MOST PROMINENT PLAYERS

WORDS: OLIVIER 'ZOLTAR' BADIN

In #128, way back in February 2005, a review of one of Norway's self-proclaimed 'Christian black metal' bands, Drottnar, launched a war of words on our letters' page that is still discussed today, proof that in a scene where gore, Satanic references and a general 'let's destroy everything' mentality are the norm, both the idea that a metal act preaching the glory of the Holy One, and the fact that they are doing so by playing a specific style of metal initially designed to be anti-Christian, is still a step too far for many.

But Christian metal is a reality, ever since glamour boys Stryper were identified as such in the mid-'80s. Sometimes referred to as 'white metal', as opposed to 'black metal', it has now its own festivals (Cornerstone, Creation), radio and TV shows, distros, magazines (Heaven's Metal) and dedicated labels, such as REX, Solid State and the more underground Nokternal Hemizphear, started by Dohgrafar in February 2008.

"I believe that in general there is a common theme, of course, as to what keeps the Christian labels doing what they are doing in utilising the medium of metal to convey a relationship with Jesus and to promote the truth of the ancient Biblical scriptures. The labels and artists ultimately have hearts for sharing hope in a dark world," Dohgrafar tells us. "Yet, with that, it is also just a simple and fun-loving thrill for metal music of various genres that keeps us going. My belief is that music is the single most powerful medium and message carrier in the history of mankind as it has a direct tap into the souls of men."

As far as metal, the whole spectrum is concerned: Antestor (black metal), Ashen Mortality (doom), Inevitable End (death metal), Living Sacrifice (thrashcore), Narnia (neoclassical heavy metal) Saviour Machine (prog/gothic), Seventh Angel (thrash/death) or the veterans Tourniquet (thrash) are just some of many Christian metal bands spreading their gospel while playing louder than Hell, not to mention the mainstream metal mobs of Underoath, Norma Jean and As I Lay Dying. Whether JC is your homeboy or not, read on as we unearth some of the most extreme disciples of the underground.

First printed in Terrorizer Issue #186

"There are plenty of things to be aggressive and distasteful about as a Christian and as a genre, metal is the perfect platform for such beliefs"

ZAO

DEMON HUNTER

Vocalist Ryan Clark and his brother Don (guitar) took their first steps in the hardcore scene (Training For Utopia) before they chose a more melodic and modern metal sound, based on the heritage of the mid-'90s metal A-list (Machine Head, Pantera and Sepultura) when they formed Demon Hunter in 2001. Now, with about 80,000 copies of their 2007 studio album 'Storm The Gates Of Hell' sold alone, they are one of their label Solid State's (Tooth And Nail's 'metal' subdivision) most successful acts, even if they have yet to play abroad.

A lot of it comes from the band's strong visual identity handled by Ryan, who is also art director for Tooth And Nail, but also creator of the 'Invisible Creatures' studio (who have worked with Foo Fighters, Coalesce and Korn).

"Both my brother and I are graphic designers and getting a specific aesthetic and vibe for the band was very important to us, whether it is in promo pictures, album covers or videos. I know some Christian metal fans think it is overall too dark but that's purposeful. There are plenty of things to be aggressive and distasteful about as a Christian and as a genre, metal is the perfect platform for such beliefs. It's also important for us to connect with kids who have dark issues. We still take references from scriptures but I'm trying to bring it down to a more daily life level. I think there's a place for the party, where you can put all your cares away, and there's a place for serious issues that conflict with the band and mainly their lyricist."

www.DemonHunter.net

MORTIFICATION

Steve Rowe is a survivor. Now 48, he has put out more than 15 albums, the first being with Light Force, Australia's first ever Christian speed metal band. But since 1989, he has had to go though hell to keep alive the band he became known for; Mortification. He even had to self-produce the band's 14th album, 'The Evil Addiction Destroying Machine', due to the lack of label support.

"Not following the trend has been an obsession of mine since the mid-'80s and I've always been against the grain. With Light Force, we weren't interested in following the thrash movement and wanted to release straight-forward heavy metal, like Iron Maiden. Same with Mortification four years later, when death metal was still very underground. Actually, our most popular album 'Scrolls Of The Megilloth' was released in 1992, at the height of the genre's popularity. And since ▸

DEMON HUNTER

then, fans have been expecting me to stay to that specific sound, but ever since its follow-up ['Post Momentary Affliction'] but I've chosen not to stay still. And when around 1994/95 most of the Australian DM bands started to split up because black metal was taking over, some people realised I was right, but I've come to accept the fact that you can never please everybody. I already read here and there on the web that some people think the new album is too 'punky' but if you go back to 'Scrolls...' and pick a song like 'Raise The Chalice', you'll find a complete punk bass riff there already."

Steve admits he listens to "very few bands with negative messages", quoting black metal as the only metal genre he has a problem with.

"I'm a cancer survivor and I was given two hours to live. Twice! But my Christian faith saved me, basically, and I want to share that with people. In 1983 I was given a record by the seminal Christian band REZ that proved you could combine great music and strong beliefs and I want Mortification to do the same for heavy metal fans out there nowadays, who have a hard time knowing how to still enjoy the music they love yet stay true to their beliefs. There's so much focus in metal on Satan and evil that there's a need for bands with a positive message. And that's what Mortification's all about."

www.RoweProductions.com

BECOMING THE ARCHETYPE

"The only way we're justifying being a Christian heavy band, with gospel-oriented lyrics, is to make the spirituality come out of the music. And if we can't do that, then we don't have any business playing heavy music."

Music is a weapon and Becoming The Archetype guitarist and keyboardist Seth Hecox is determined to use it. Primarily a melodic death metal band and discovered in 2004 at the Cornerstone Festival, where they were still performing under their former name The Remnant, by Ryan Clark from Demon Hunter who immediately signed them to Solid State, they've got thrash but also prog leanings, piano parts and clean vocals. Those guys know their metal inside and out and they have no problem "decorating our doorway to draw people in", having secured Kristian 'Necrolord' Wåhlin (who's worked with Dissection, Bathory, and Ensiferum) to design the cover of their third album 'Dichotomy', produced by Devin Townsend in his Vancouver studio.

"My Christian faith saved me, basically, and I want to share that with people"

"We were the first, and probably only, Christian metal Devin has ever recorded and we had many discussions with him beforehand. He said that his best work with Strapping Young Lad came out of desire to tear the world apart so he first couldn't understand why another spirited-person would want to do such an album and how something positive could come out of it. So we wanted to prove to him, and the rest of the world, that it could be done."

www.Facebook.com/BecomingTheArchetypeMusic

HORDE

When Horde's début, 'Hellig Usvart', was unleashed in March 1994, it had everything necessary to get caught up in the whole black metal whirlwind that was just starting to blow over the underground. That was until the listener would realise, through such idiosyncratic songtitles as 'Invert The Inverted Cross' or 'Release And Clothe The Virgin Sacrifice', that the unthinkable had arrived; the first anti-Satanic black metal album.

"The biggest misconception about Horde was that the whole thing was a piss-take whereas it's absolutely not the case," underlines former Mortification drummer Jayson Sherlock who, under the pseudonym of Anonymous (yes, an obvious reference to Euronymous) wrote, recorded and performed the whole album by himself in a four-day session in July 1993. "I quit Mortification in 1992 to focus on my studies and joined Paramaecium as it was a less time-consuming band, yet it also allowed me to explore a more gothic/doom direction. But at the same time I was heavily listening to Darkthrone, Immortal and the whole Norwegian scene. I was truly a black metal fan and whereas I always had problems with openly Satanic death metal bands like Deicide, I've always thought that most of the Norwegian bands were a bit more subtle than that, above the average 'hail Satan, fuck Christ' gesture. So the whole idea behind Horde was to pay tribute to the genre, not make fun of it, thus the use of Norwegian, the artwork and stuff. Only the lyrics were different as I wanted to shed some light on a scene drowned in darkness. Yet, I respect that style too much to dare call Horde black metal, thus my idea of calling it 'unblack metal'."

Since no interviews were given, nor shows played, after the album's release, speculation was rife, even before the proliferation of the Internet, about the identity of that offender of thee unholy black metal temple.

"After the album was out, I kind of moved on to other things and never even bothered revealing I was responsible for that album. It's later on that I discovered that Steve Rowe was rumoured to be Anonymous, had received hate mail and various death threats!"

The irony is that the first, and most likely last ever, Horde gig happened in the black metal capital, Oslo, for Nordic Fest in 2006. Since Paramaecium folded around the same time, he has been playing bass and doing vocals for In Exordium, "a pure old school death metal band" and moved away from both the Christian metal and the unblack metal scenes.

"Horde had the perfect career: only one cult album, only one gig 13 years later, also released on DVD and CD, and that's it. Adding anything to that would ruin the magic."

www.MySpace.com/Helligusvart

ZAO

Even the guilty parties themselves would agree: Zao's first albums were not only very influential for the whole metallic hardcore scene in the second half of the '90s, with such cult releases as 'All Else Failed' (1995)

BECOMING THE ARCHETYPE

MORTIFICATION Pic: STEVE ROWE

and 'When Blood And Fire Bring Rest' (1998), but were also the first openly Christian band of that scene. Problem is that now in 2009 album number nine 'Awake?' is said to have nothing to do with their original theme, and also there's no original members left in their line-up to explain what's happened.

"At first, the whole point of the band was to be a Christian band. I mean, they were talking straight out of the Bible back then! But when Daniel Weyandt [vocals] joined in 1997, he took the spirituality to another direction," reveals guitar player and former Creation Is Crucifixion member Scott Mellinger, regarded nowadays as Weyandt's co-pilot. "With our new album, we're questioning the public, hence the question mark in the title: if you're not awake, if you're not paying attention, is life really worth living for? You've got to look around you to see what's wrong and hopefully do something about it. We make angry music for sure but to me, anger without basis isn't helping. Personally, I'm no Christian but I'm no atheist either and I think that cutting yourself from spirituality is wrong. Zao are not a Christian band but we're about spreading a positive message and thinking with your heart first. And I guess that to some that makes us a Christian band."

www.Facebook.com/ZAO.Official

BELIEVER

Kurt Bachman has no problem with the Christian metal scene. The thing is, despite the fact his band Believer were regarded in the early '90s as a Christian tech-thrash band, he just doesn't feel part of it.

"I guess the whole misunderstanding started off with our name, we picked it from the Ozzy Osbourne song of the same name, the irony being that we originally were called Deceiver. Our primary influence was German thrash metal, Destruction, Kreator and so on, but we had all those Biblical references in our lyrics so we were thrown in some kind of scene we didn't really belong to. I'd say we were too different and people needed to categorise us in a way or another."

Their three first full-lengths released between 1989 and 1993 (and reissued last year on Metal Mind), left their mark on the small but persistent tech-thrash scene, especially 'Dimensions' (1993) and its final epic track 'Trilogy Of Knowledge', a 20-minute-plus song with complex chord arrangements and female vocals.

Although they never officially split up, the band went on a long hiatus after the release of this album, only to reunite around founding members Bachman (guitars and vocals) and Joey Daub (drums) in 2006. During that 13 year period, Kurt completed his PhD in molecular medicine and started his own cancer research lab, and Joey performed with Fountain Of Tears "but we've never lost touch. We started playing music together for fun in 2005. And since our former record label had agreed to let us use the 'Dimensions' recording budget to get our own studio and since we've kept it going over the years, to record bands like Earth Crisis for example, we were able to take it one step at a time. And when Howard Jones from Killswitch Engage heard about us being back together, he got in touch with us, saying he was starting his own imprint, with a distribution deal through Metal Blade and that he wanted to release our new album. Simple as that!"

Though it doesn't feature any direct Biblical quotes anymore, new album 'Gabriel' still maintains that level of confusion about Believer members being members of the JC fanclub. And don't you expect Kurt to clear things up:

"As a music fan myself, I like to figure out what a song means to me. And I hate it when musicians are trying to shove down people's throats what their music is about. So yeah, as for the title, we could be referring to the Archangel Gabriel but hey," he laughs, "my dog's called Gabriel, so who knows?" ☠

www.Believerband.net

Reasons To Be Heathen

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO A WORLD OF HELL AND ETERNAL DAMNATION THAT CAN STILL MAINTAIN ANY HINT OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE? OF COURSE! FOR THE BEST PART OF THREE DECADES, MARTIN WALKYIER HAS LED THE CHARGE FOR HEAVY METAL, FROM THE THRASH DARKNESS OF SABBAT TO FOLK METAL PIONEERS SKYCLAD AND NOW THE CLAN DESTINED. TERRORIZER INVITED MARTIN TO DISCUSS HIS PAGAN BELIEFS AND THOUGHTS – FOR THE GREATER GOOD...

Many years ago now when I was a lad, and dinosaurs still roamed the earth, we had compulsory Religious Education classes at my high school. Thankfully these were very open-minded and liberal affairs, where I was given the opportunity to learn about a broad spectrum of belief systems throughout the ages. I think it is vital to provide young minds with as many varied viewpoints as possible when it comes to ethical subjects such as politics and religion; thus enabling them to reach their own educated conclusions in adult life.

Whilst most of my fellow students considered these R.E. lessons to be about as appetising as soggy broccoli, I on the contrary was always a weird kid, keen to learn as much as possible about what makes different people 'tick'. When I was 14 years old I scored 98 per cent in my R.E. Examination, and my enthusiastic teacher (who was as it so happens a devout Christian) held me back after his class to enquire whether I had ever considered a career as either a theologian or a member of the clergy. I will never forget the look of complete shock and astonishment upon his face when I told him that I followed a faith radically different to his own.

From a very early age I had become increasingly disillusioned with the patriarchal religions like Christianity, Islam and Judaism, believing that whatever elements of truth they contained had long since been manipulated, corrupted and watered-down to nothing by a bunch of misogynistic, grumpy, old men.

These 'Angry God' theologies have been twisted down the centuries by hateful bastards who have sought every means to oppress the unwashed masses and keep women subjugated in their place as second-class citizens. It sickened me to learn how religions which claim to have peace and love at the very heart of their doctrines had been responsible for countless wars, persecutions and genocides throughout the last two millennia of human history.

Being a typical rebellious teenager back in those days, I naively turned to the 'occult' in the hope of finding some more substantial answers. I devoured every book on esoteric subject matter that I could get my hands on; from the works of Crowley and LaVey to the classics by Dante and Marlowe. Many of the lyrics on Sabbat's 1987 debut 'History Of A Time To Come' album were written whilst I was still attending my high school aged just 16, hence the occasionally childlike Satanic/Faustian outlook I had upon life.

The deeper my mind delved into these Hadean realms, the more that I gradually began to realise that Satanism is in actuality nothing more than the selfish, inbred, six-toed-cousin of traditional orthodox Judeo-Christianity. I had a nagging suspicion down inside me that composing nothing but poems about the Devil and perdition would be a rather juvenile waste of my creative efforts, when there already were so many REAL evils in this world to wax lyrical about. Whilst dressing all in black and raising your arms in salute to The Lord of Vril and Darkness may look extremely cool in graphic novels, horror movies and metal videos, if taken too literally, then this train of thought can be a one-way ticket to an extremely bleak future indeed. There was already an extensive sociological Big Brother-style experiment undertaken in Germany between 1933 and 1945 into how a cruel, self-obsessed, Satanically motivated regime could function with ruthless efficiency by brainwashing and indoctrinating an entire population. The outcome wasn't a particularly jolly one I seem to recall!

It was only when I began to investigate the spirituality of our ancient ancestors that I discovered a belief system imbued with all the elements of compassion and common-sense I'd found so sadly lacking everywhere else. Our forebears largely coexisted in harmony with the cycles of nature, they worshipped and revered both the masculine and feminine aspects of the Divine. Professor Brian Bates' excellent book 'The Way Of The Wyrd' had a profound influence upon me, inspiring the lyrical concept on the Sabbat 'Dreamweaver' album. An understanding that humanity can survive only by respecting nature and the environment has, in my humble opinion, even more relevance in the world today than at any previous time throughout human history. A faith which joyously embraces LIFE in all its horny glory is surely a vastly more positive mindset to cultivate than any of those that preach their negative gospels of death, guilt, repression, suffering and salvation only through repentance?

Our Pagan predecessors believed that the entire universe is intrinsically interconnected by an unseen multidimensional 'web' that transcends all traditional concepts of space or time. It has taken thousands of intervening years and cost countless trillions of dollars funding Quantum Theory experiments, until the very brightest minds at the cutting-edge of modern science eventually reached exactly the same conclusion that our 'primitive' ancestors discovered many aeons ago about the bizarrely strange-but-true nature of physical reality.

As humankind basks in the early morning light of a brand-new Millennium, are we all tragically doomed just to repeat the mistakes of our recent past? Petty religious and racial intolerance is still as prevalent in this brutally beautiful world today as it ever was; but technology has now advanced to such a level where we could easily reduce all the precious life on this fragile Earth to a smouldering pile of ashes in just the blink of an eye. I sincerely hope and pray that our fellow humanity can rapidly evolve spiritually as a species to the point where we shall no longer even contemplate such crazed and suicidal insanity.

"Christian, Pagan, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh & Jew; just face these fundamental facts I preach at you. We've a duty to the future not to self-destruct. We'd better learn to live as one or else this planet's fucked!" ☮

www.Facebook.com/Martin.Walkyier.5

"A FAITH WHICH JOYOUSLY EMBRACES LIFE IN ALL ITS HORNY GLORY IS SURELY A VASTLY MORE POSITIVE MINDSET TO CULTIVATE"

JAZ COLE

KILLING JOKE'S FRONTMAN JAZ COLEMAN IS NO STRANGER TO THE ESOTERIC; THE 53-YEAR-OLD HAS LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN MYSTICISM. THIS LIFELONG INSPIRATION CAN BE HEARD IN THE LIKES OF 'PANDEMONIUM' AND OTHER WORKS INCLUDING HIS COLLABORATION WITH ANNE DUDLEY, 'SONGS FROM THE VICTORIOUS CITY', AND THE VARIOUS SYMPHONIC WORKS HE IS INVOLVED WITH. TERRORIZER DISCUSSES ALL WITH THE MAN HIMSELF...

WORDS: RONNIE KERSWELL-O'HARA **PIC:** STEVE BROWN

RELIGION

"I had two very unconventional parents who were both school teachers. They were certainly not religious types – they were almost anti-establishment religion. At the age of four it was decided that I'd do music so my relationship with music was a kind of an arranged marriage. I've never thought I could do anything else – it was clear from the moment of consciousness that this was my task in this life. I went to a state school but I had private music education, violin and piano. I found my life in the church and I evolved from there into various cathedral choirs along the way. I missed loads of school just going on different music courses, choir courses and private music education. I shocked my parents at the age of six by becoming involved with choral music and a study of mysticism. By the age of eight I had an extensive occult library so I really embraced who I am."

MYSTICISM

"I was drawn to the church but it was the ritual I was really drawn to. I started studying the religions that were there before Christianity. I met this Franciscan Friar and I used to go on pilgrimages with him and he would say stuff like, 'These stone circles and this route that we're taking is a ley line and it's of a religion that is before ours'. It got me thinking at a young age and I started researching; my mother used to buy my brother and myself a book every month. We could have any book we wanted and I was always in the mysticism, witchcraft and occult section! It wasn't scary or Demonic in any way to me and never has been. When I met up with Big Paul [Ferguson, drummer] we were looking at the Golden Dawn system which is based on the Rosicrucian philosophy [in a nutshell, a theory that Mary Magdalene was married to Jesus Christ], the Knights Templar issue and Freemasonry – and that has had the biggest hold over me all these years. Any opponent of the Church of Rome is a friend of mine!"

EGYPTIAN MAGIC

Jaz studied Arabic music in Cairo, and 'Songs From The Victorious City' was recorded in 1990 with musicians including the Art Of Noise's Anne Dudley and acclaimed Egyptian percussionist Hossam Ramzy. So it was only natural for Killing Joke to try and capture some of that Egyptian magic on the recording of their tenth album, the 1994-released 'Pandemonium' where they recorded the track 'Exorcism' in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid at Giza. "That was an amazing experience. We went out to Egypt as I'd been working in studios out there a lot on different projects. I said to Youth [bass]: 'I know this studio...' and he said, 'No, no, we're going to record in the Great Pyramid...' I was like, 'Yeah. Right...' As soon as we got there we met these three female Egyptologists who said they could get us in there but we'd have to say we were going in there for meditation purposes and it would cost us $2,000 [US] for three days.

"We went to see the Minister Of Culture and bribed him and that was it. It was hysterical; as soon as we'd got our stuff into the chamber, the three Egyptologists did this opening ceremony. They were all dressed as Isis and Hathor. They gathered at the back of the chamber and there was this silence and Youth goes, 'Ere, Jaz. Who are those three weird birds at the back?' He didn't recognise them. One of the problems was that there was nothing to plug your equipment into in the chamber so we had to take in eight hours of batteries and every time we took them into the chamber it drained it so we only had 10 minutes of power. Our engineer fell asleep when we were doing our opening ceremony and he woke up with a start and ran out screaming! He hasn't been back in a pyramid ever since. We didn't use any reverb on the vocals as the stones inside the Great Pyramid just made a massive reverb. When we came out of the King's Chamber there were Bedouin tribes all chanting and clapping; that was also an unbelievable experience."

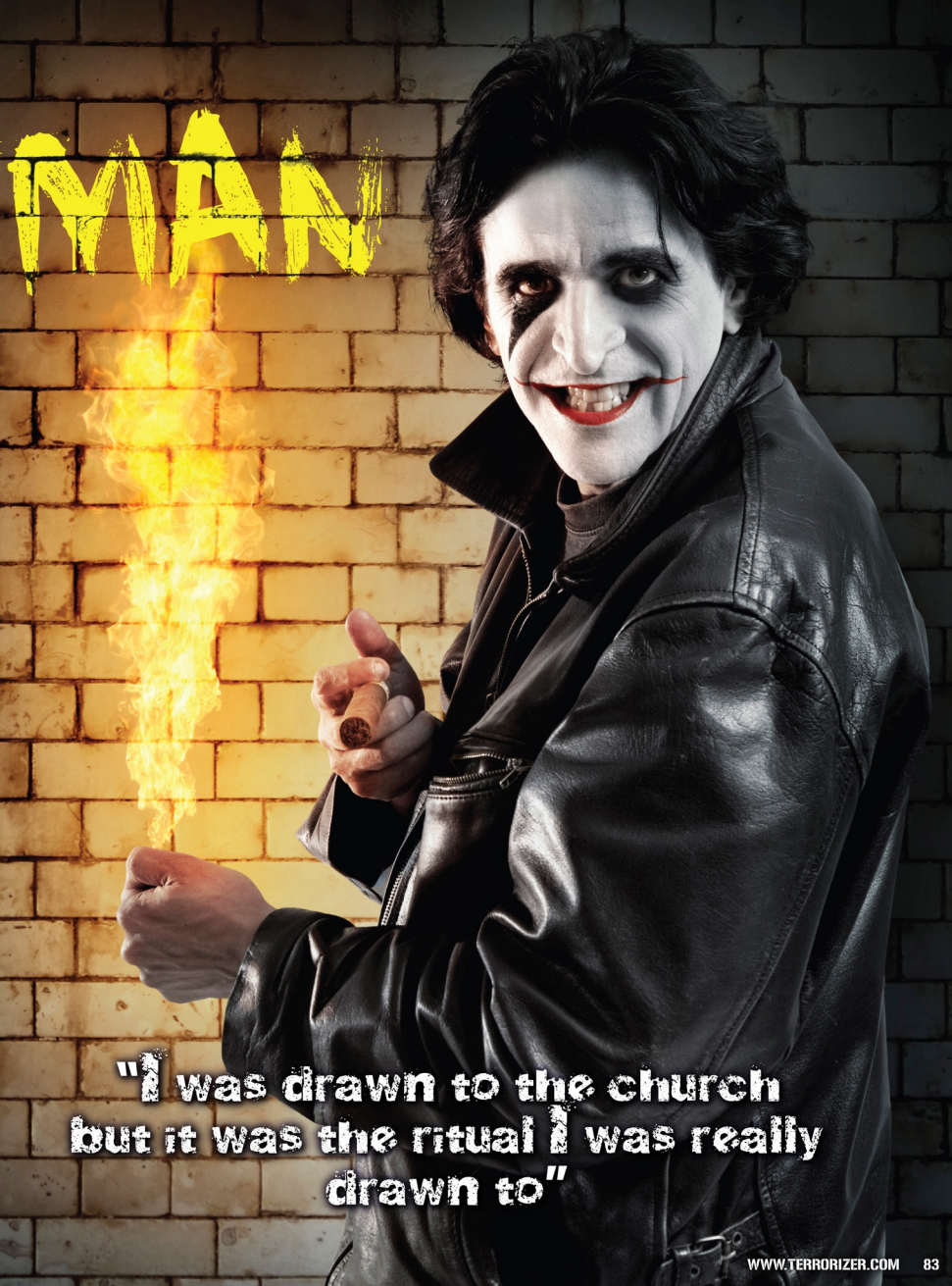
CEREMONY

"[The shows] are very highly ritualistic. When we first started we had Dave, a tattooed, strange man doing fire-dancing on stage to 'Wardance' so the whole ritual side has always been very important. It's an awesome and solemn occasion and I wouldn't like to abuse it by over-playing. Killing Joke is a ceremony, it celebrates a process of catharsis, which, in the end, is what music is about. All the nasty things in my gut – whatever I loathe or hate or what's on my mind – this is what Killing Joke is. It's to cleanse this. These ceremonies are what Killing Joke live is: when the music becomes personified, people go there almost like a church. It's absolutely spiritual and we must be one of the first bands to take our music into a fully-fledged school of thought. After a concert I feel cleansed, and cleansed, literally, by fire. It's very important to do it properly and you can't do it properly unless you've got the will of everybody, like moods at the right time and the right point of history and timing."

PSYCHIC LYRICISM

"Our timing at best is immaculate; 'Empire Song' came out the week of the Falklands War, and the headline of The Sun was 'Another Empire Backfires'. The song was written some two months before that event. I work with very unusual techniques in terms of how I derive my lyrics. Basically the lyrics are what I always feel we're moving into, I get insights and I ritually prepare myself. The way I receive lyrics, I have to be doing certain things and be very active and you have to say what you mean and cut to it. It's emotional; the emotions are what fires the process. It's very physical; it's more effective than getting holy communion." ☠

'The Singles Collection 1979-2012' is out now on Spinefarm/ Universal
www.Facebook.com/KillingJokeOfficial


MAN
"I was drawn to the church but it was the ritual I was really drawn to"

BACK IN 2011 WITH THE WIND AT OUR BACK AND A HAMMER IN OUR HEART, TERRORIZER FOLLOWED IN SOLITUDE VOCALIST PELLE 'HORNPER' ÅHMAN DOWN THE LEFT HAND PATH AS THE BAND PREPARED TO BRING THEIR LIVE RITUAL TO THE UK...

WORDS: J. BENNETT PHOTO: ESTER SEGARRA

On Burning

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Generally speaking, it does not bode well for one's article when an interview subject wants to rephrase the very first question you ask them. But Pelle 'Hornper' Åhman is not your average interviewee. When we spoke to him in 2011, at just 19, he had already recorded two excellent and infectious albums as vocalist and spiritual leader for Swedish trad metallers In Solitude. His inimitable baritone has been favorably compared to the equally inimitable voice of King Diamond, which is an analogy that Pelle both appreciates as a compliment and disagrees with from a technical standpoint. There's also the matter of his closely guarded Satanic philosophies, the details of which warrant some degree of clarification. Which is exactly what we get when we ask him what came first – In Solitude or Satanism?

"I would prefer if I could rephrase your question to, 'Which came first, In Solitude or Satan?'," he begins. "But I don't really know what came first. From a very early age, I felt drawn toward the shadows of things, whether it was music or books. Somehow, in the midst of all the things I was reading and listening to, I discovered so much about myself that I knew Satan had been there all along."

In fact, Pelle's early forays into music and literature – much of which he undertook alongside his not-much-older brother Gottfrid, who plays bass for In Solitude – proved crucial to both his artistic development and his spiritual cognisance. Musically, he cites some of the usual suspects for any metallically-inclined young man: Black Sabbath, early Mayhem, the first three Metallica records. But then he'll name-check recently departed 1970s Swedish prog-rock instrumentalist Bo Hansson, obscure Texan proto-death squad Necrovore and freshly reunited avant-legends Swans – none of which are exactly typical fodder for a 19-year-old from Uppsala. And then there are his non-musical influences, which include Irish stained-glass artist Harry Clarke (1889-1931), English chaos magic enthusiast Austin Osman Spare

"FROM A VERY EARLY AGE, I FELT DRAWN TOWARD THE SHADOWS OF THINGS"

Paths

(1886–1956) and Swedish surrealist poet Gunnar Ekelöf (1907–1968). "Ekelöf especially is very, very important to me," Pelle offers. "Discovering things like that and seeing how they inspired me when I was younger – not only to do music but to seek deep into myself with writing – I would love to inspire people who were my age at that time because it meant so much to me. I want other people to find that."

Pelle may soon get his wish. In Solitude's trajectory is only moving onwards and upwards, with a US tour alongside New Orleans supergroup Down underway (rumour has it they were hand-picked for the slot by Phil Anselmo himself). Meanwhile, the international metal press have engaged in an enthusiastic and well-deserved circle jerk over the band's second and latest full-length, 'The World. The Flesh. The Devil', which exalts the idiom of prefix-free heavy metal with a fervour and attention to detail not glimpsed since the early '80s. Not that Pelle reads his own reviews or anything...

"I don't keep track of forums or magazines or things like that," he says. "But I've noticed that there's a lot of talk. What can I do? I appreciate it. When we were done with the album, we thought it must get people's attention. It's interesting to see what people think."

Given the cult of personality that stalks certain musicians like the protagonist in a shitty detective novel, 'what people think' can often assume the attributes of an electrical force – made all the more relentless by the one-click wonders of the Interhole – that tends to stray from discussions of the musician's actual work. In Pelle's case, many have understandably zeroed in on his age. Combine this with the fact that he's made more than one offhand reference to his own death, in both his lyrics and in previous interviews, and questions are inevitably posed. "I don't talk about death because I necessarily want to end or destroy something," he explains. "For me, coming closer to death unravels a lot. It opens up very big things. You have to question things within you and outside you. It's a direct awakening. But I don't know if I ever said I wanted to die. I'm very pleased with my life, but death is very important to me. It's something I explore every day."

Pelle describes his creative process as a trance state. When he writes lyrics, he feels as though he's been seized by forces beyond his control. "The words come in a flash, usually in the night when I am alone and in a certain mood or state. They seem to come from nowhere. I can be going about my normal life and suddenly understand about something I've gone through and then there's an emotional tract that opens up even further, to the depths of what lies beyond. At these moments, I'm able to communicate with a part of myself that most of the time slumbers because of the kind of society that we live in and the mundane, everyday life we have to go through. But at certain points, you can escape that world. You're in your own shadow in a way and you can talk to it."

It's perhaps not a stretch to suggest that this brings us back to Satan. And clearly, 'Satanism' is not the preferred nomenclature. But Pelle obviously has a relationship with that fallen angel of a thousand names, and it's a relationship worth examining. "Let's call it the left hand path," he offers helpfully. "But it's a very long and thorny way. Books and beliefs and systems are just like road signs that show what speed you should go and where you should turn. Once you've understood the magical vocabulary, you can break down those rules and build your own. Writing lyrics and songs and performing them live have been very important ways for me to understand who I am. Satan is a part of this, sure, but..."

Here he breaks off, uncertain of how to continue. "I'm sorry if I'm being cryptic," he says. "It's hard when a metal magazine asks these questions, because they are big questions in my life and I have to choose my words carefully in order not to confuse myself."

We mentioned earlier that Pelle is not a typical interview subject. He proves this again by emailing us – twice – shortly after our conversation to expound upon the nature of his ongoing Luciferian experience. "I must add that my lyrics are the closest I can get with words to describe or translate my relationship with Satan and the burning path," he writes. "And it is the closest anyone from the outside can come to it. That's why I involve myself in writing them in the first place: My lyrics are what I choose to share with the rest of the world. That's why I'm not at all very comfortable with talking about that very, very intimate part of my life with others. Not that you asked any improper questions. I appreciated all of them a lot – [it was] one of the best interviews I've done. But I wish not to come across too cryptic or absent. My lyrics are my translations and my renderings of my relation to Satan. People should read them closely for any answers." ⛧

www.Facebook.com/InSolitudeOfficial

PICS. ESTER SEGARRA

LEADING THE CHARGE IN THE NEW WAVE OF DEVIL'S MUSIC ARE SWEDEN'S GHOST B.C.. NO STRANGERS TO THE PAGES OF TERRORIZER SINCE THEY RELEASED THEIR DEBUT ALBUM 'OPUS EPONYMOUS' IN 2010, PAPA EMERITUS II AND HIS NAMELESS GHOULS ARE CURRENTLY THE MOST TALKED ABOUT BAND IN ROCK. HERE WE LOOK AT WHAT MAKES GHOST B.C. SUCH A UNIQUE AND EXCITING PROPOSITION. THEN OVER THE NEXT 10 PAGES, ENJOY A GLIMPSE INTO SOME OF THE MOST EXCITING BANDS WHO ARE CRANKING SONGS OF DARKNESS... WORDS: JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS

"Without a shadow of a doubt, this will be the IT-BAND of 2010 and beyond," wrote none other than Darkthrone's Fenriz himself, on his Band Of The Week feature on April 8th, 2010. The great godfather of metal, with a better ear for it than most of us put together, brought a little Swedish band to worldwide attention, on underground terms at least, already predicting how big they were set to become and also coming up with what is still the best description for Ghost B.C.'s music: "Mercyful Fate melts down the wall in a way Arvo Pärt would make it sound." All Fenriz needed was the first demo (consisting of 'Ritual', 'Prime Mover' and 'Death Knell') along with the lyrics, even if he already had them on his radar after listening to a rough mix of 'Death Knell' earlier on and labelling it an "instant wonderful hit", and his prediction at the time was so accurate that it was like someone had put a crystal ball in front of him.

And so it began. Even if Ghost B.C. would probably become the "IT-BAND of 2010 and beyond" in any case, that initial push by Fenriz turned out to be decisive to quicken that process. Lee Dorrian got turned on to them with that post and signed them to Rise Above a short time after, later that year 'Opus Eponymous' was released on the Cathedral frontman's label, and the rest... the rest is history still in the making, as Ghost (now Ghost B.C.) have just released their second album, 'Infestissumam', on a major label this time, and no-one really knows where this world domination fairytale/deviltale will end, and how high the shadowy ensemble will be able to rise.

Why, though? What is it about Ghost B.C. that makes them so captivating, so instantly fascinating to everyone across the music spectrum, from occasional radio rock-listening mainstreamers who have never even heard of Mercyful Fate or Blue Öyster Cult to seasoned, jaded old schoolers who've seen and heard everything but still can't help falling under the spell? Ghost B.C. seem to be so universal that even the natural backlash and hate that always follows when a band breaks big is much less noticeable than any example we can think about. Obviously, there are people who can't stand them, but not in a particularly vocal or militant fashion. Why are Ghost B.C. so universal?

The anonymity factor is a huge one, but we'd feel wrong if we started with that. No, first and foremost, it's the actual songs that have to be mentioned as the main reason. Because they're worth that priority, for once. We're all sick of seeing bands ascend to superstardom without a damn good tune to their name, relying only on cheap stunts, publicity tricks and easy songwriting shortcuts to captivate a dumbed-down numerous audience. Ghost B.C. are not like that. They have proper, solid, amazing songs as the very cornerstone of their success. Papa Emeritus could shoot black fireworks out of his papal posterior, and it wouldn't phase anyone if they didn't have 'Elizabeth', 'Ritual', 'Death Knell', 'Satan Prayer', 'Year Zero', 'Secular Haze' or 'Ghuleh/Zombie Queen' (or, hell, all of them) rolling around our heads all day, with choruses, riffs and melodies that stick to our brains and refuse to wash away. Yes, they take a lot of cues from the aforementioned influences, but doesn't everyone? Much like metal's breaththrough acts of the past few years, like, say, Mastodon, what Ghost B.C. have done is mash up all their inspirations and come up with something that is entirely their own. Even if you're presented with a brand new song, you'll know it's Ghost B.C. after five seconds, every time. That's personality.

And then, of course, the anonymity is indeed cool. But that's just part of a bigger thing. Anonymous bands aren't new, and through the years we've all seen that gimmick alone can't last long as a support for anything (hello, Lordi). Ghost B.C.'s anonymity is but a component of their entire carefully thought out image and concept, a concept that is transversal to the storyline their albums are following, to their ever-growing, massive stage show, to the very cinematic, step-into-a-different-world posture they adopt when they're incarnating their personas. It's important to realise, as one of the Nameless Ghouls (one of the guitarists) all but told Terrorizer recently, that Ghost B.C. was thought out from the beginning to be a big band.

"The idea has always been to create a big scale show, which means that we're aiming to take this to the highest possible level in order to create that show that we've always envisioned, and the way that we believe that Ghost B.C. will excel. Because Papa doesn't fit into a little club," he says.

The whole point of Ghost B.C. is to create a gigantic musical-like theatrical world into which you'll step at the beginning of a show and forget reality, and the hidden identities are but a tool to achieve that suspension of disbelief. And it works. Has anything changed since everyone read on the Internet what Papa Emeritus' real identity is rumoured to be? Nope, nothing. The character still exists and he's still fascinating as ever. As that Nameless Ghoul (and we still have no idea who he is, by the way) also touched upon, that's not what really matters. The universe that Ghost B.C. have built is much bigger than a simple face-hiding gimmick. It's become a container for concepts that might or might not relate to the real world – in many ways, it's like an inverted mirror of our society, our relationship with religion, with divinity and, ultimately, with ourselves. And it works because, through the songs, the artwork, the stage show and the concept of the band, Ghost B.C. have created an iconography, a mythology even, which they will build upon regardless of whether we'll all one day find out all the names behind the cloths. You know who the actors are when you watch a good movie, and you'll still empathise with the characters for a couple of hours. Papa Emeritus II and his surrounding cast are a fascinating cast of characters that we can't wait to see in new, improved sequels of the act we're currently witnessing.

Don't think they haven't planned those sequels already. As we've come to discover the people behind the band, little by little, through conversations, interviews and statements, it's become ever more clear that there is a big master plan at work here. Typically we love it when musicians tell us that they have no plan, that everything they do is from the heart and spontaneous and that they've never dreamed of any of this that's happening to them. We love the working class, honest musician, and for good reasons too. But this is different, Ghost B.C. are different. Papa doesn't fit into a little club, remember? And this is as it should be. If Ghost B.C. are to reflect the opulent luxury of the Catholic church, they have to be big, they have to be larger than life. Just like all those ▶

"If Ghost B.C. are to reflect the opulent luxury of the Catholic church, they have to be big, they have to be larger than life"

bands you worship from the '70s and '80s... everyone keeps saying that times are different, that there can never be bands like that again, arena-fillers like Led Zep, like Maiden, like Metallica, like AC/DC, well, here's one. More than that here's one *designed* to be one. While the band might not know for now how long they'll be around or how many records they will release before the end, it seems obvious that they will command attention for as long as they are around, and that they will never fade away, because that end, that ultimate climax, has also been thought about already. The guitar-playing Ghoul promised us Ghost B.C. will "go out with a bang", whenever and wherever that will be. We're terrified.

Ghost B.C. are so fascinating that they're breeding. It's patently obvious by now that we're in the middle of what can be described as an 'occult rock' trend. We mean it in a good way, without most of the negative connotations usually associated with the word 'trend', and we're also aware that 'occult rock' is a bit of a lame term, but at the same time that's what's so fascinating about it, that many bands can fall under this unifying, retro-tinged, Sabbath-worshipping feeling that fits people like The Devil's Blood (sadly extinguished), Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats, Jess And The Ancient Ones, Blood Ceremony and a whole bunch of others – it's even plausible to include more far-out acts like Ancient VVisdom, Hexvessel or Aluk Todolo. All this would be happening on a much smaller scale if it wasn't for Ghost B.C.'s influence. Sure, we were looking back to the '70s already before Ghost B.C. with the likes of Witchcraft and Jex Thoth, and The Devil's Blood were around and making waves already too, but there wouldn't be so many bands being so visible and playing everywhere if Ghost B.C. hadn't ascended to the pantheon of greatness and pointed everyone in the direction of Satan, '70s rock and catchy melodies. Most importantly, they did that without a whiff of the dreaded "retro" word. They were inspired by past greats, yes, but they didn't try to be just like any of them. They don't state in interviews that their "influences" (another dreaded word) are this or that band – in fact, they rarely talk about bands at all, much preferring, tellingly, cinematic metaphors to describe their intentions. That's the difference between putting together a bandwagon and riding it or merely jumping on it waiting for others to decide where the ride is going. And this bandwagon seems to be a particularly rich one, as it turns out. As trends go, it's by far the most exciting one in many years, and with Ghost B.C. leading the way, packed arena after packed arena, it's a movement likely to continue spawning hordes of Satan's little helpers for many years still. We'll raise our horns to that. ☠

www.Ghost-Official.com

"The idea has always been to create a big scale show... Because Papa Emeritus II doesn't fit into a little club"

UNCLE ACID AND THE DEADBEATS

Words: Rob Sayce

Are Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats truly doing 'The Devil's Work' as they suggest on the closing track of their new album? As with most questions surrounding this most mysterious outfit, it's not easy to find a satisfying answer. Coming out of nowhere (AKA Cambridge) and gaining recognition with their mind-warping second album 'Blood Lust' in 2011, the Uncle and his nameless cohorts attracted an unbelievable amount of interest both in and out of the heavy music world, and now they're set to return with a follow-up, the equally beguiling 'Mind Control.' Prepare to be sonically manipulated...

"If you can imagine that some hobo just released from jail in 1969 was given $10,000, a bag of cocaine, and some casting couch actresses and told to go make a film in the desert... this is what it would be," says the Uncle of his latest dastardly work. "It's the lowest piece of garbage imaginable. It should be wrapped in a brown bag and kept under the counter. There's a nice picture on the front though. I think the censors got to it."

While 'Blood Lust' was mired in the druggy, distinctly British world of Hammer and its Horrors, this follow-up is more of a cult biker flick in nature; unrated and distinctly unseemly. Musically however it's cut from a not too dissimilar cloth, fuzzed-up doom vibes enshrouding surprisingly poppy melodies. And while the occult rock boot does seem to fit, the last thing the Uncle's interested in is being part of any scene.

"I just go my own way and see what happens," he explains. "There shouldn't be any limitations in music. I only write songs for myself so, as long as I like what I'm doing, there aren't any limitations at all. It seems to me that once bands get to a certain level of success, they become afraid of losing popularity, so they start making albums that sound exactly the same as the last. I'd rather build something up and then annoy everyone by destroying it. I'm really not interested in how people try to categorise this."

As such, it'd be foolish to brand Uncle Acid and co. a Satanic band just because of their lyrical themes. If the horned one plays a significant part in their musical universe it's more to do with those aforementioned Hammer classics than anything particularly concrete.

"Hammer Horrors have a slightly grainy quality to them that you don't get with modern horror films, and that's always attracted me," relates The Uncle. "I'd say my favourites are Dr Jekyll & Sister Hyde, Scars Of Dracula and Vampire Circus. They're not the greatest films ever, but you can't beat them for atmosphere. I'm big on Film Noir too, though. I love gloomy street scenes, hot women, sleazy bars, hard drinking, murder – it's all there. Even the worst Film Noir with no storyline is more enjoyable than the Hollywood crap of today."

They might not be The Devil's disciples, but one thing's for sure: Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats definitely have the best tunes. All hail. ☠

'Mind Control' is out now on Rise Above
www.Facebook.com/UncleAcid

"I LIKE TO BUILD AN AIR OF MYSTERY, PAINT A STORY AND PUT IT IN THIS FANTASTICAL PSYCHEDELIC WORLD"

Pic: ASTRID SEGARRA

PURSON

NAMED AFTER THE GREAT KING OF HELL, LONDON-BASED NEWCOMERS PURSON ARE ALL ABOUT FANTASY AND REVITALISING PROG, AS FRONTWOMAN ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM EXPLAINS

WORDS: JOHN CONSTERDINE

Whether it's the demonic connotations of their band name or their borderline Coven sound, it's easy to see why psychedelic revivalists Purson are often linked to the occult rock movement sweeping its way across the globe. In fact their very presence in this magazine suggests that they have dealings with the devil, but for ringleader Rosalie Cunningham it's a rather peculiar association.

"I find that quite strange because I wouldn't see us as occult rock; there's a definite darkness and mystery in the music but there aren't any occult themes in my writing at all, people can read from it what they will but that wasn't my intention."

The 22 year old vocalist/guitarist, joined by George Hudson (guitar), Sam Shove (keyboards), Barnaby Maddick (bass) and Jack Hobbs (drums), is, however, more than happy to elaborate on where exactly she does draw her inspiration from. "The way that I write lyrically, I don't like to literally just say what's going on. I like to build an air of mystery around it, paint a story and put it in this fantastical psychedelic world; they are mainly just personal experiences, there's no witchy stuff or anything [laughs]."

Away from the séances and Ouija boards that inhabit occult rock, Purson's charm comes from their love of music from a by-gone era. "I feel bad saying that I don't listen to new music but I don't! [laughs] There's such a wealth of good bands and good genres in the late '60s/early '70s that it's just overwhelming," says Rosie. "I'm pretty into prog; Amon Düül II, Soft Machine, Van der Graaf [Generator], King Crimson, then lots of '60s Psych. I'm [an] absolutely obsessive Beatles fan and they're my biggest influence musically."

Another string to Purson's psychedelic bow is the way in which they conjure up those other-worldly sounds in the studio, particularly on latest effort 'The Circle And The Blue Door'. No prizes for guessing which format they prefer recording in. "The real help was at the mixing stage because it wasn't recorded particularly well at all, in fact most of it was recorded in my bedroom," elaborates Rosie. "It was mixed at Gizzard Studio, I mixed it with a guy called Ed Deegan and it's all analogue so he really gave it that magic, all the tape effects and things really helped."

Looking forward, Rosie has high hopes for where the band's debut effort will take them, which should come as no surprise – it is her brainchild after all. "I just want to be on tour and writing constantly, just have it take over my entire life. In terms of the album being perceived, I'd like it to be as big as possible, it doesn't really fit into any category, [so] hopefully the metal audience will get it, hopefully the rock audience will get it and hopefully it'll crossover pop wise, that's the dream; I want everyone to like it."

With peers such as Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats and The Sir Admiral Cloudesley Shovell, Purson are in very good company to make that leap and this current crop of bands harking back to the late '60s and '70s is one that Purson seem delighted to be a part of.

"I'm really pleased that it's happening," says Rosie, "I'd just say that people are finally playing good music again; it's just a massive 30 year blip." ⊛

'The Circle And The Blue Door' is out now on Rise Above

www.Facebook.com/PursonTheBand

> ""I LIKE TO BUILD AN AIR OF MYSTERY, PAINT A STORY AND PUT IT IN THIS FANTASTICAL PSYCHEDELIC WORLD"

Pic ESTER SEGARRA

You wouldn't expect two ex-Integrity brothers to suddenly help revolutionise the way we perceive occult rock and its derivations, but AVV thrive on the unexpected. With a mostly acoustic songwriting framework and using surprising instrumentation, such as machete percussion (you have to see it, really), the band already has two remarkable albums released, 'A Godlike Inferno' and 'Deathlike', on which Nathan Opposition sings surprisingly clear, catchy and profoundly heartfelt odes to apocalyptic visions, wasteland-dwellers, profane entities and Satanic beliefs, lullabying you and blackening your heart and soul at the same time. Channelling a darker kind of Roky Erickson oddballness, as much Alice In Chains as Death In June, as much classic '70s rock as soulful '80s death rock, all of which comes through on their heavily ritualistic live shows, AVV's musical cocktail is one that explodes quietly, but the waves it creates are lasting. Already with several prestigious festival appearances and touring opportunities under their belts, Nathan and the boys will continue to be on the opposition for a long time, like a thorn deeply rooted in god's side.

ANCIENT VVISDOM

www.Facebook.com/AVVFB

Another new band that feels ancient, as worn and comfortable as an old ritual robe that fits just right. That's because Bloody Hammers' traditional musical values are all but timeless, such as their devotion to the unseen forces of evil. There is a purple woman with a goat's head on their debut album cover, alright? Bloody Hammers are obvious about what they do, it's all smoke and candles and witches and pentagrams and Satan wherever you turn, and there's plenty to turn to in their songs. Though the Charlotte, NC outfit does keep it simple and uncluttered, the amount of Sabbath riffs, vocal harmonies, nods to classic horror and just plain songwriting richness to be found in each of their carefully crafted songs turn each listen into a mystical journey. Listening to that 2012 self-titled first album is like finding out your grandpa was in fact a black wizard and he left you a trunk full of all his apparatus, plus the tapes he used to listen to while performing his unholy rituals, and going through it item by dusty item.

BLOODY HAMMERS

www.Facebook.com/BloodyHammers

Pic ESTER SEGARRA

Preaching their gospel over the UK for over half a dozen years now, you know what you're getting with Witchsorrow, as the trio soldier on in their unwavering dedication to true doom. As the unholy ghosts of Sabbath, Vitus and old Candlemass flutter around frontman Necroskull, bassist Emily Witch and drummer David Wilbrahammer, only the heaviest, most crushing riffs are allowed in order to lay down their tales of witchcraft, witch hunts and godless woe. In a way, Witchsorrow are a sort of Cathedral if Lee Dorrian's departed entity had only recorded 'Endtyme' over and over. Despite the stoic nature of their dedication to the doom cause, Witchsorrow are not averse to evolution, and the progression was noticeable on last year's 'God Curse Us', their second album, where some bluesy influences seeped into their sound without, however, alleviating any of its inherent heaviness.

WITCHSORROW

www.Facebook.com/WitchsorrowDoom

DEMON LUNG

The demon of their namesake surely is a heavy smoker, as his lung is full of black smoke and gravel. With Shandra Fredrick's hauntingly harsh vocals leading the charge, Demon Lung are doom personified – the genre stripped down to its basic form, to the point that sometimes it even feels like some sort of lost death/thrash classic merely slowed down to a horrid crawl on a room full of dope smoke, and yes, that pun is very much intended. Hailing from the depths of Las Vegas, they have sin running through their very blood, and that is extremely noticeable on their Satan-ridden smoky, psychedelic debut EP 'Pareidolia', a collection of four miserably despondent tunes that signal the arrival of a very promising act. Their Candlelight debut will drop very soon.

www.Facebook.com/DemonLungBand

Pic LEE EDWARDS

BLACK MAGICIAN

One of the most exciting bands to appear in the effervescent UK doom scene in the past few years, Black Magician eschew the predominant classic horror film take on the occult and go straight to nature for their inspiration. The isolated English countryside is as much of a foundation to their traditional doom as it was for '60s British folk which they draw heavily from. Profoundly anti-urban to the point of calling their album 'Nature Is The Devil's Church', Black Magician are the colourful, kaleidoscopic voice of the landscape that surrounds them, the shady acoustic passages and constant, swirling Hammond space-outs giving it the air of alchemical menace that's so sorely lacking in most bands of this kind.

www.BlackMagician.co.uk

JESS AND THE ANCIENT ONES

OCCULT ROCK MAY HAVE SPAWNED MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF PENTAGRAM-SPORTING PRETENDERS, BUT WITH THE MESMERISINGLY PSYCHEDELIC 'ASTRAL SABBAT', FINNISH NEWCOMERS JESS AND THE ANCIENT ONES ARE SHAPING UP TO BE SOMETHING INFINITELY MORE INTRIGUING

WORDS: FAYE COULAMN

"True dark magic is not about dressing up like others, or wearing corpse paint, inverted cross or pentagram necklaces. It's about inner freedom, rebellion and growth, not about herd mentality or limiting yourself," observes Jess And The Ancient Ones' Thomas Fiend on the mindless scenes and trends the Finnish rockers frequently find themselves pigeonholed into. As today's explosive occult rock movement gathers ever-increasing momentum, such crass labels are arguably unavoidable for a female-fronted seven-piece whose collective nostalgia for Led Zeppelin is rivalled only by their fascination with esoteric magic. But as the purveyors of a spellbinding sonic ritual of kaleidoscopic riffs, occult principles and mind-altering visuals, it's clear the sum of these wildly imaginative parts is no such gimmick or changeable trend. Having first established the barebones of their trailblazing sound in 2012 with a blistering self-titled full-length, the months that followed saw the Scandinavians delve still deeper into these intense, psychedelic trappings with the mysteriously titled 'Astral Sabbat.' In doing so, this unique EP left critics at a loss when it came to compartmentalising the enormously varied influences and traditions contained within.

"I really don't follow that actively what other people do or say, but I've still noticed some things I don't agree with," the guitarist responds thoughtfully. "One mistake some people seem to make is that they see us as a metal band, which we are not. Another thing is that people want us to fit into the 'occult rock' genre, to obey some kind of unwritten scene rules. As an occultist, I couldn't care less about the so-called 'occult' rock genre or its criteria. I have certain things I feel I need to accomplish in this life, and certain milestones to pass when it comes to evolving as a musician. So in a way, we are intentionally breaking inner musical boundaries and rebelling against rules from any direction."

Despite being released a mere nine months on from their debut album, 'Astral Sabbat' proved to be no ordinary step forward in the band's continued progression as a musical unit. As founding duo Thomas Corpse and Thomas Fiend set about penning their most recent studio offering, it fast became apparent that the dramatically different energies they encountered this time around demanded a creative space entirely independent from that of their debut.

Thomas expands: "'Astral Sabbat' stands alone beautifully as a separate release, and in this light it's kind of a connecting thread between two spots. This EP felt like it needed to be a separate release, there's a different vibe to these songs than in the songs for the next album, which we are working with already."

Led by charismatic songstress Jess' sumptuous, powerfully expansive vocal presence, 'Astral Sabbat' spans a vast, intensely hypnotic spectrum of '60s-flavoured psychedelia, smouldering reverb and brooding balladry pulled off with swaggering, irresistibly playful panache. From the soulful, electrifying guitar lines of 14-minute epic 'More Than Living' to a dazzling cover of Shocking Blue's 'Long And Lonesome Road', 'Astral Sabbat' owes much of its genre-defying magic to the incredibly varied backgrounds of its respective members. But despite roots in genres as wide-ranging as extreme metal, punk and jazz, it's the deep-thinking occult philosophies the seven-piece share that Thomas pinpoints as the ultimate source of JATAO's limitless creativity. And, whatever your stance on the paranormal, there's no understating the soul and sincerity that drives this thriving artistic unit.

"I'm a member of an international occult organisation," Thomas reveals. "And the philosophy is to explore the dark aspects from various spiritual traditions and ancient doctrines. It's at the same time impossible to verbally describe those experiences with the dark forces, yet you feel compelled to try, to channel that creative energy out." ⛧

www.JessAndTheAncientOnes.com
'Astral Sabbat' is out now on Svart

"TRUE DARK MAGIC IS NOT ABOUT DRESSING UP LIKE OTHERS... IT'S ABOUT INNER FREEDOM, REBELLION AND GROWTH"

Witch rock, anyone? Initially lumped together by many with The Devil's Blood more out of timing of their appearance and lazy writer convenience more than any other blatant similarity, Canadians Blood Ceremony really came into their own with their second album in 2011, 'Living With The Ancients', which has left us mouth-watering for a successor since it first invoked all its beautiful demons on us. None of them more beautiful than frontwoman Alia O'Brien's mesmerizing voice, the definitive unique factor in Blood Ceremony's sound alongside her use of the flute, lending the band a distinctive Jethro Tull-meets-Sabbath flavour that we haven't heard this well done in many a moon. As that second album piled more and more elements on the band's sound, such as a remarkable use of vintage organ, more the band is able to evoke with terrifying clarity their visions of classic horror, saturnalia, witchcraft and otherworldly psychedelia. New album 'The Eldritch Dark' is due out imminently.

BLOOD CEREMONY

www.Facebook.com/BloodCeremonyRock

PIC: STEVEN DUNCAN

Sera Timms already had us enthralled with her bewitching presence on the equally amazing The Black Math Horseman, but the dark siren must have thought we weren't deep enough under her spell yet so she joined forces with writer (and, as it turns out, guitarist too) extraordinaire J. Bennett and drummer Kelly Johnston in an all-new ghostly entity that has already given us a few tastes of its eerie, luminous take on atmospheric occult rock. 'Constantinople' was a stark and austerely elegant full-length premiere last year that was as fascinating for what it delivered as for the possibilities it opened up for the trio's future direction. Their brand-new Record Store Day 7", 'Hexagram 45', is a perfect example of their delicate balance of light and darkness, with one heavy metallic song co-existing peacefully with a dreamy guitarless number.

IDES OF GEMINI

www.Facebook.com/IdesOfGeminI

The premise alone behind Sabbath Assembly is already brilliant (and freakishly creepy in its own way too) enough to attract any follower of the dark arts – take the hymns of the Process Church of the Final Judgement, an apocalypse-centred religious cult of the '60s, and process them through hazy psychedelic rock? Yes, please. Especially when David Nuss has enough good taste to surround himself with individuals that couldn't be more apt to the job of laying down these hymns if they were hand-picked by the devil himself – Jex Thoth enchanting on the first album, Jamie Myers (Hammers Of Misfortune, Wolves In The Throne Room) doing the same on the second with Genesis P-Orridge showing up as narrator too. That's more than the required dose of awesome to portray the alien strangeness that emanates from these hymns. Brothers and sisters, let us pray!

SABBATH ASSEMBLY

www.Facebook.com/SabbathAssembly

SEREMONIA

With Uncle Acid leading the way, Finland seems to be a hotspot of new occult talent, Seremonia the newest shining example of that. On their breakthrough self-titled debut, Noora Federley and Ville Pirinen's voices intertwine with each other, exhaling the kind of alienness that only the Finnish language seems capable of, while all around them acid-fuelled Coven-inspired krautrock madness crashes down. Seremonia offer a fascinating cacophony of fuzz, noise, drowned riffs and strangely seductive vocals, so straight from the 60s and so far-out in their psych explorations that you'll want to learn Finnish just to trip alongside them in complete unison.

www.Facebook.com/Seremonia666

YEAR OF THE GOAT

Year Of The Goat hail from Sweden, or the country of good music as Fenriz himself has put it given how many occult treasures have been unearthed from there in recent years, as if a time capsule from the '70s had been opened, but their music is far from cold or distant. Using mostly analogue equipment, the warm vintage fuzz that envelops you as the sextet launch into their psychedelic travels will be welcoming enough to make you feel absolutely safe, until you start seeing all the skulls, black candles and goat's heads that is. But by then it's already too late – as Pope Mellotron croons his way into your black heart and the sextet lock into their sticky Blue Öyster Cult melodies as a more menacing, NWOBHM-oriented Ghost B.C. might do, your soul has already escaped your body and is now their property.

www.YearOfTheGoat.se

SATAN'S WRATH

Pic: TAYA UDDIN

WORDS: DARREN SADLER

Satan's Wrath's debut offering 'Galloping Blasphemy' was perhaps one of the surprise outstanding heavy metal albums of 2012. Donned in denim and leather, armed with bullet belts, studded wristbands the size of Peru and more galloping riffs than every Iron Maiden album combined (the ones that count anyway, and we all know which ones those are), it was an album that was steeped in heavy metal tradition without falling into the cheese department. The other very important component to Satan's Wrath's success was the band's lyrical love and devotion to the Horned One.

"If we didn't had a satanic concept I wouldn't find any reason to continue the band," says frontman Tas Danazoglou. "All my favourite bands have or had a Satanic concept and only the fact that a band is Satanic gives me a hard-on. Now of course there are bands that declare themselves Satanic, but then they wear skirts and make-up instead of corpse paint; it reminds me of clowns of the highest buffoonery."

Tas has been studying the bible of heavy metal since his formative years in Greece. Having spent his entire life playing in bands – most recently a stint in Electric Wizard playing on and touring in support of 2010's 'Black Masses' – Satan's Wrath, says the multi-instrumentalist, captures the true spirit of heavy metal evil.

He says: "Heavy metal is made to be evil and nasty. Black Sabbath's 'Black Sabbath' tolled the bell of Hell with the Devil's rain and the most satanic tritone ever. Right after, the name Judas Priest says it all. The evolution of all that gave us Venom, Mercyful Fate, Slayer, Possessed and so on. Heavy metal is the music of Satan and the sound of hell. It's a way of life for the children of darkness and the minions of the archfiend. There're a lot of pretenders among us of course but they will be annihilated. Heavy metal is the sound of rotten corpses and the smell of Satan's breath."

While still to play a show – Satan's Wrath don't intend to do a 'Darkthrone' – Tas is currently rehearsing the band as a quintet. They have also just recorded the follow-up to 'Galloping Blasphemy', which is set for release later this year on Metal Blade – the home of evil luminaries such as King Diamond and, of course, early Slayer.

Of the record, which is entitled 'Aeons Of Satan's Reign', Tas says: "It's recorded inside a mortuary and blessed by the unholy trinity of Tartarus, distilled from any modern impurities. It will exterminate any album of its category and will be remembered through the centuries as the ultimate mass execution of poseurs. Its darkness will echo eternally."

Evil, indeed has no boundaries.

www.Facebook.com/666SATANSWRATH666

"HEAVY METAL IS A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE CHILDREN OF DARKNESS"

Profoundly atypical (they were signed to Hydra Head up until the label's demise, which should give you an initial hint) black metal devastation is what mysterious Dutch trio Nihill offer, each album an excursion into the blackest horrors of the furthest cosmos and/or the deepest fetid tomb of inhumanity. Though the pestilent vocals have recently been revealed (the band was anonymous until the release of 'Verdonkermaan') to be spewing from the throat of Michiel Eikenaar, growler/shrieker of the highest order in the equally amazing Dodecahedron and Anaphylactic Shock, that hasn't lessened any of the murky, skin-crawling impact of songs like 'Spiral: The Tail Eater' from that last horrid masterpiece or 'Vacuum (The Complexity Of Entering The Vaults Of Death)' from 2009's 'Grond'. Put it this way – not many black metal bands play Roadburn, and when they do, they are the terrifying Urfausts of this world and their ilk. Welcome Nihill into that fold.

NIHILL

www.Nihill.Bandcamp.com

When you call an album 'Occult Rock', you have to fuckin' mean business. Fortunately, this is Aluk Todolo (which means "way of the ancestors", in case you were wondering), so that comes as a given. After years of scaring everybody off with the darkest, most hellish of blackened drone/doom noise, this shadowy French outfit turned on the (kraut)rock and improvised their way into the history books with an album so intense that it hurts, and one that promises to discreetly help revolutionise the genre that gives it its title. The audacious double-disc monster is a trance-like journey that no-one will survive unscathed, be it from brain failure due to riff overload or by sheer exhaustion from the incessant doom grooves that ooze from the speakers. Phew.

ALUK TODOLO

www.Amortout.com/AlukTodolo/

Necros Christos' last album features two of the words we've probably used most in this entire special magazine – 'Doom Of The Occult', it is called, and it more than lives up to its name and elevated Necros Christos to a higher level by its own subterranean death metal merits. For a long time swimming in the darkest waters of the underground, the German band has only started to put out full-length releases with 'Doom Of The Occult's 2007 predecessor 'Triune Impurity Rites' and since then their growth has been amazing. With ritualistic interludes tightly weaved into the devastating death metal songs on their records, it's hard to think of a proper death metal band that embodies the mouldy, foggy atmosphere of ancient horror myth as intrinsically as this hypnotic outfit.

NECROS CHRISTOS

www.DarknessDamnationDeath.com

NEGATIVE PLANE

Old school pummelling black metal destruction, but with a scarily real and obscure twist; that's what Negative Plane offer. If you were at their 2011 gig at the Purple Turtle in London you're probably still in therapy about it, and you'll know how under your skin those nightmarish blasts from 'Stained Glass Revelations' can slither. Tellingly, frontman Nameless Void is also in Occultation, where the ancient arts and the horror of death are revered in a musically different way, but with the same veil of shadows seemingly covering everything.

www.Facebook.com/pages/NEGATIVE-PLANE/109271222488206

Pic: MAIJA LAHTINEN

HEXVESSEL

While Mat McNerney's wide range of musical influences was known by those who had had any sort of contact with the man usually known as Kvhost - Dødheimsgard, <code> or Decrepit Spectre - it came as a surprise to most when he just up and left the (post) black metal scene altogether and established Hexvessel. 2011's 'Dawnbearer' was a fascinating modern-day homage to the haziest, most psychedelic sides of Canterbury folk, a record seeped in British-ness but interestingly conceived while Mat came to terms with a period of isolation in far away Finland. It's follow-up 'No Holier Temple' came last year and the band has just completed a companion EP called 'Iron Marsh', which includes a Yoko Ono cover song.

www.Facebook.com/Hexvessel

The Devil His

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